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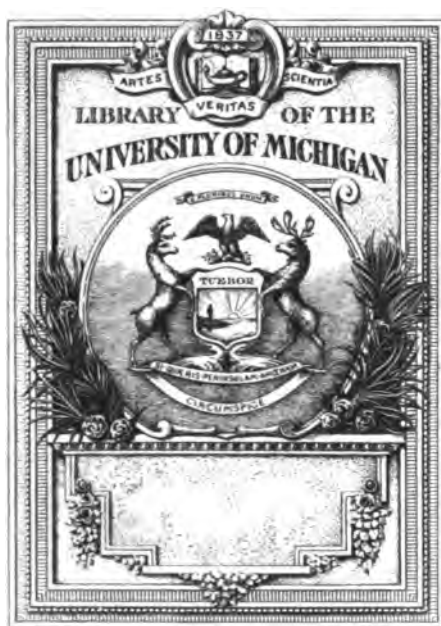
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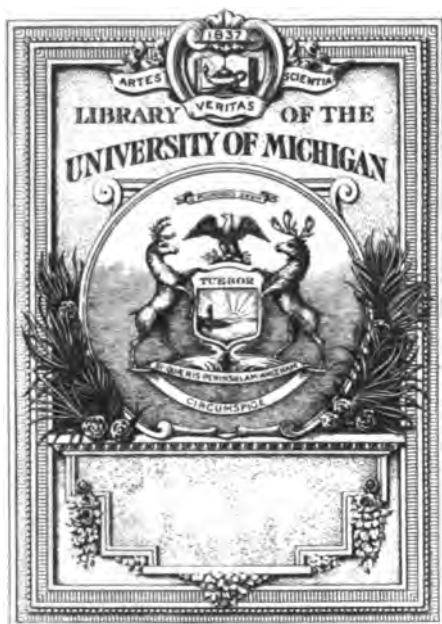
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**: SOPHIE DAWES :  
QUEEN OF CHANTILLY**









**SOPHIE DAWES**  
**QUEEN OF CHANTILLY**  
**BY VIOLETTE M. MONTAGU**  
**WITH A PHOTOGRAVURE FRONTISPIECE**  
**AND SIXTEEN OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS**  
**AND THREE PLANS**    ⌘    ⌘    ⌘    ⌘

**"CELUI QUI VEUT UNE CHOSE EN VIENT À BOUT ;  
MAIS LA CHOSE LA PLUS DIFFICILE AU MONDE,  
C'EST DE VOULOIR. PERSONNE NE PEUT SAVOIR  
QUELLE EST LA FORCE DE LA VOLONTÉ."**

**JOSEPH DE MAISTRE.**



**LONDON : JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD**  
**NEW YORK : JOHN LANE COMPANY MCMXII**



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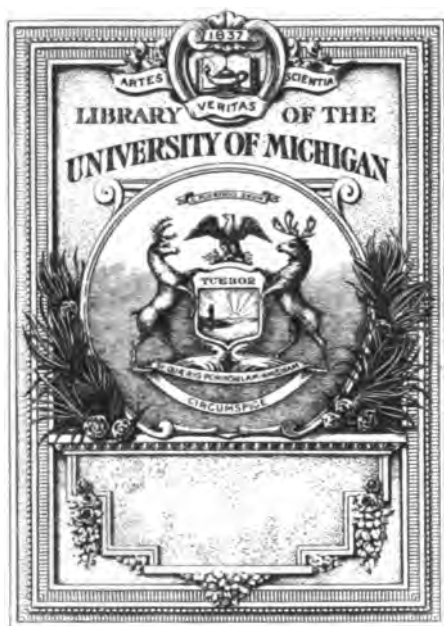
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## INTRODUCTION

WHILE making some researches in connection with the history of the d'Orléans family at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, I found mention of a certain Englishwoman, Sophie Dawes by name, whose conduct as the mistress of Louis Henri Joseph, duc de Bourbon, the last of the Condés and the father of the poor young duc d'Enghien, had been made the subject of much discussion in France during the years 1820-33.

On inquiry, I discovered that whereas very few of my English friends had ever even heard of such a person, Sophie Dawes, Mme. de Feuchères, and Queen of Chantilly, was a familiar name to every French student of that rather uninteresting period—uninteresting to foreigners, at least—of the history of France.

Our chief interest in the good deeds, misdeeds and the sins of omission of Louis XVIII, Charles X and Louis-Philippe lies in the fact that these monarchs lived so near our time. Those forty odd years passed in undignified efforts to regain the



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**: SOPHIE DAWES :  
QUEEN OF CHANTILLY**







*Sophie Dawes*

*From a miniature painted by Eliot & Sons in 1842*

*Musée Condé, Chantilly*

YORK: JOHN F. C. G. & S. P. CO.

## Introduction

valuable information concerning Sophie Dawes' childhood and last days.

My thanks are also due to the eminent French historian, M. Joseph Turquan, who kindly placed at my disposal some very valuable books and pamphlets, including a work which is now extremely rare owing to the fact that many copies were seized and burnt by the police. This book, entitled *Histoire et Politique de la Famille d'Orléans : Révélations sur la mort du prince de Condé, correspondance inédite*, by Alexandre de Lassalle, and published by E. Dentu at the Palais-Royal, in Paris, in 1853, is especially valuable to anyone who wishes to study the history of the d'Orléans family and to examine the case of the princes de Rohan *v.* Mme. de Feuchères and the duc d'Aumale. This work is unique in that it contains the whole of the thirty-two letters from and to Louis-Philippe, Marie-Amélie, his queen, and the duc de Bourbon and Sophie Dawes, his queen, which were discovered in the Tuileries when that palace was pillaged, February 24th, 1848. This correspondence might almost be said to be of equal importance with that found in the celebrated *armoire de fer* ; it throws a lurid light upon the private life of the duc d'Orléans, later Louis-Philippe, and the Bourbon-Dawes establishment. Had some of these letters been produced during

## Introduction

the above-mentioned lawsuit, they might have turned the balance against this remarkable Englishwoman, of whom Sir H. Jenner Fust, in granting letters of administration after her death, said : " She was a person of very extraordinary talents ; her history is the greatest romance of real life within my knowledge."

Let this learned opinion, then, serve as my excuse for penning a monograph upon her who exercised such fatal influence over the last of the Condés.

Up to the present, in spite of the efforts of Mr. Walpole and Mr. Lane, the place of burial of Sophie Dawes remains undiscovered. It is hoped, however, that the interest that this volume is likely to arouse will be the means of bringing to light many new facts relating to her life and death. Mr. Lane will be glad of any such information, that it may be included in a new edition.

My acknowledgments are due to Mr. Lane for discovering the whereabouts of the Sophie Dawes portraits, as until he traced them none were thought to exist, and I am also indebted to him for the view of the Château de Chantilly before its destruction.

VIOLETTE M. MONTAGU

PARIS, *September*, 1911.





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**: SOPHIE DAWES :  
QUEEN OF CHANTILLY**





# SOPHIE DAWES

## QUEEN OF CHANTILLY

### CHAPTER I

Birth and childhood of Sophie Dawes—Early struggles against adversity—The cost of a trip to the *pays du tendre*—Sophie's first lovers—She meets the duc de Bourbon—Her education is completed—Sophie follows her truant lover to France—Recapture—Sophie marries Adrien Victor de Feuchères—The *ménage à trois* returns to France—Sophie the *ingénue*—The baron de Feuchères retires from the scene—Sophie is forbidden to appear at court—She begins to plot—An envoy is sent to the duchesse de Berry—Defeat—Birth of the duc d'Aumale—Sophie tries to find a godfather—Christening of the baby prince—Sophie provides for her nephew—James Dawes is created baron de Flassans—Death of Marie Thérèse Bathilde d'Orléans, wife of the duc de Bourbon.

**I**T was a strange fate which hovered over the humble fisherman's cottage in which Sophie Dawes, later baronne de Feuchères and mistress of the duc de Bourbon, the last prince de Condé, opened her eyes for the first time to gaze upon this world of change and unrest. It was a cruel fate which took her away from the scene of her triumph almost before

## Sophie Dawes

she had had time to enjoy the good fortune which she had taken such infinite trouble to acquire.

There must have been several good fairies at the child's birth—Beauty, Health and Intelligence were certainly there. But Perseverance must have kissed the baby on both cheeks when she endowed her with that extraordinarily strong will to which, in after life, everything and everybody had to bow.

Born in a fisherman's hut, brought up in a workhouse, educated by a royal duke and married to a baron was already a sufficiently extraordinary fate ; but Sophie Dawes (or Daw<sup>1</sup>) was evidently Fortune's favourite, for she lived to inhabit a royal palace and died envied, if not esteemed, by her neighbours and less 'fortunate compatriots.

Sophie was born at St. Helens, in the Isle of Wight ; but the exact year of her birth is uncertain—some say she was born 1790 ; other historians put her birth five years later, in 1795. A friend of the family, a certain William Stallar, declared that she was born in 1785—she herself said 1792, which seems to be the correct date and is generally accepted.

<sup>1</sup> The name was originally Daw, but afterwards the family seemed to have adopt the lengthier name of Dawes. The name seems to have given Sophie's biographers considerable trouble. I find her frequently called Miss Sophie Dawès or Davès.



THE BIRTH-PLACE OF SOPHIE DAWES, ST. HELEN'S, ISLE OF WIGHT  
*The house marked with a cross was formerly thatched, but has now been modernized*



## Her Childhood

Sophie was the daughter of Richard Daw, a celebrated Isle of Wight fisherman and smuggler, and many stories are still told of the encounters of "Dickey" Daw and the Preventive men; close to Bembridge are the "Dickey Daw" Banks, and between them is a narrow passage still called "Dickey Daw's Gut."

Her mother's name was Jane Callaway;<sup>1</sup> as this worthy woman was described as a spinster when she died in Hammersmith somewhere about the year 1834, we may conjecture that Richard Daw possessed the same contempt for what people said or thought of his behaviour which his daughter displayed as Mme. de Feuchères and caused the virtuous *bourgeoises* of Chantilly to say that she had brought immorality to that town.

Sophie was one of ten children, only four of whom lived to grow up. As a child she was employed in picking winkles on the beach at St. Helens; but about this time Richard Daw's habits of intemperance forced his family to seek shelter in the Newport House of Industry, which was the name attached to the workhouse before the Act forming the Poor Law Unions was passed.

A situation was found for Sophie in the family of a farmer in the neighbourhood, and she left the

<sup>1</sup> A well-known fishing family in the Isle of Wight, which still exists there.

## Sophie Dawes

House of Industry in October, 1805, to take up her new position with the following worldly goods :—

A List of Waring Apparil Sent  
With Sophia Daw.

1 Bonnet	1 Bonnet
4 Shifts	6 Shifts
2 Gowns	4 Gownes
2 Petticoats	4 Petticoats
3 Aprons	6 Aprons
2 Pr. of Stocking	3 Prs. of Stocking
8 Caps	8 Caps
4 Half hankierchifs	9 Half hankerchief
1 Stays	2 Stays
2 Pr. of Shoes	2 Pr. of Shoes

House of Industry.

C. Holis. October 11th, 1805.

In the original document the list on the left side was, no doubt, the outfit first arranged for Sophie, as it is written in copperplate with the numbers of the articles filled in afterwards ; the list on the right seems to be in the writing of Holis, who was master of the House of Industry, and was, no doubt, the correct list of clothing with which Sophie started on her new life in the great world. She, however, did not stay long in this place, but ran away, and local tradition says she was taken to Portsmouth by an old Hal Southcott in his wherry, where she obtained a situation as chambermaid at the George Hotel. From Portsmouth she went to London, where we next hear of her as a







## Early Struggles

milliner's assistant. London probably appeared to her as a more suitable sphere in which to cultivate her talents—for Sophie, from her earliest years, seems to have had a genius for getting on in the world. But the task of adorning other women's charms is a hard one, especially when one is young and handsome oneself; and we can easily imagine that Sophie did not find much pleasure in constructing those heavy turbans and consumption-inviting costumes which, after the severely simple fashions of the revolutionary period, turned the heads of French and English belles alike. Probably Sophie's pride of her own personal charms and her faith in her own powers of fascination were stronger than her taste for millinery.

If we believe Adolphe de Belleville who, in his clever and witty little work *Les Secrets de Saint-Leu*, is not over-tender to her who was later to become Queen of Chantilly, it was about this time that Sophie, for the first and only time, departed from her usual line of conduct and was so imprudent as to bestow her affections upon a water-carrier. Alas! she paid dearly for her short peep into the world of romance, for her employer dismissed her and she was forced to earn her daily bread by selling oranges to the "gods" at Covent Garden Theatre. She seems to have fallen

## Sophie Dawes

into extreme poverty ; so poor indeed was she, that we lose sight of her entirely for a time. Nothing more is heard of her until we find her making her *début* on the stage of the very theatre in which she had once acted the part of orange-girl. M. Billault de Géraïnville, in his *Histoire de Louis-Philippe*, denies the fact that she ever appeared in public ; but we are inclined to believe otherwise, for Sophie, in latter years, was very fond of acting little comedies to amuse her friends, on which occasions she displayed more talent than is usually found among amateurs and an utter absence of stage-fright.

Her first step on the road to success, however, was to attract the attention of a rich officer (whether in the English army or not is uncertain) who established her in a house on Turnham Green. This *liaison* lasted for some time and then the lover, having grown weary of his fair friend, bought her an annuity of £50 a year. But £50 must have seemed a mere pittance to Sophie who during her brief reign of prosperity had probably grown accustomed to rich viands and silken attire. Why, £50 would scarcely pay her milliner's bill !

Sophie had now developed into a fine young woman, not exactly pretty or handsome, but she held her head gracefully and her regular features were illumined by a pair of remarkably bright

## Servant-maid in London

and intelligent eyes. She was tall and squarely built, with legs and arms which might have served as models for a statue of Hercules. Her muscular force was extraordinary. Her lips were rather thin and she had an ugly habit of contracting them when she was angry. Her intelligence was above the average and she had a good share of wit.

Our heroine seems to have been again engulfed in the quagmire of London life after the departure of her opulent protector. We next hear of her as servant-maid in a house of ill-fame in Piccadilly frequented by many wealthy *émigrés*, including the comte d'Artois, the duc de Bourbon, etc. Now the latter prince had a trusty old servant named Guy who had accompanied his master when certain disturbing and particularly unpleasant events forced the *noblesse* of France to seek shelter in Germany, Holland, Belgium, Sweden, Russia, America and even in *la perfide Albion*. Guy called his royal master's attention to the pretty serving-wench; although Sophie's face had already lost the first bloom of youth and innocence, she was still sufficiently good-looking to win the duke's favour and—what is far more important—to keep it until habit had riveted the chain too firmly for anything but death to break it asunder.

## Sophie Dawes

According to M. Daufresne, formerly intendant of the princes de Rohan's<sup>1</sup> civil list, Sophie Dawes was made the subject of a wager at a game of whist played between the Earl of Winchelsea, the duke of Kent and the duc de Bourbon who had the good luck—or rather bad luck—to win the young baggage.

Before going further into the history of her who was to become known to all France as the Queen of Chantilly, we will give a short *résumé* of that of her unfortunate lover and victim.

Louis Henri Joseph, duc de Bourbon and prince de Condé, son of Louis Joseph, prince de Condé, and father of the unlucky duc d'Enghien, Napoleon's victim, was born August 13th, 1756. He served under his father, the organizer of the celebrated *Armée de Condé* in 1789, in company with that band of enthusiastic royalists who, having placed the frontier between their precious persons and danger, helped by their tardy and ill-advised action to hasten the miserable end of those for whom they fought. While serving under his father, the duc de Bourbon received a wound in the left arm which in future prevented him using his left hand except with great difficulty—a sig-

<sup>1</sup> The princes de Rohan-Guéméné, represented by Charles, duc de Montbazon, were the natural heirs of the duc de Bourbon by his mother who was Godefride de Rohan-Soubise. This branch of the Rohan family now lives in Austria.

## The Duc de Bourbon

nificant fact, as we shall see later on in our story. It must be confessed that the young warrior displayed much courage throughout his brief military career and proved himself a worthy descendant of the great Condé.

He then emigrated to England, where he remained until 1814, making occasional visits to France and Spain. The duc de Bourbon, while in London, seems to have contracted curious habits of parsimony. Mme. de Boigne tells us that her father was commissioned by the prince de Condé to go to England and try and induce the prodigal son to return to his own land. The duc de Bourbon, however, preferred to live in a squalid back street in London with his faithful servant Guy as his sole attendant and to take his meals in a chop-house, a habit which shocked his fellow *émigrés* who did not consider such places suitable for a person of his birth and education.

It was the custom at the London theatres in those days to sell all remaining seats at half-price after the conclusion of the first act. Although well provided with funds by his father, the duc de Bourbon used to saunter about outside the theatre doors waiting until he could get a place at half-price. He frequently invited low women to accompany him to the play, after which he used to go and sup at one of the cheap eating-houses in the neighbourhood.

## Sophie Dawes

Sir William Gordon was his most constant companion on these occasions ; but he was more often alone owing, no doubt, to this strange habit of parsimony.

Sophie soon obtained tremendous influence over the duc de Bourbon. It is not known when their *liaison* began, but it was probably about the year 1810 ; for in 1811 we read that the duke took a house for her and her mother in Gloucester Street, Queen Square, in order that Sophie's education might be completed. Sophie was an ambitious young person and it was probably at her request that this was done. Now her education, hitherto, had only been such as most charity children received at the end of the eighteenth century : a little spelling and some reading, less writing and a slight acquaintance with the Scriptures, chiefly gleaned from Dr. Watts' hymns and from sundry awful warnings as to what would happen to her if she were not obedient to her elders and betters.

The duke engaged the best masters to teach his young friend ; three years were passed in mastering modern languages—Greek, Latin and music. Sophie, however, never lost her English accent and, although she could read and write French perfectly, she was unable to hide the fact that French was not her mother-tongue.

Sophie's exercise-books containing translations

## Her Education

from Plutarch's *Lives* and Xenophon's *Cyropædia*, says M. Billault de Gérainvillle, prove her to have been gifted with more than ordinary intelligence. When we remember with what class of men and women—men, especially—Sophie had hitherto associated, it is wonderful to think that she could settle down to the drudgery of learning when she was long past the age of inky fingers and smudged copy-books. Sophie must have worked hard, for at the end of those three years she was a good linguist, could play and sing quite well enough to please the ordinary amateur of those days, and was fit, as far as education went, to take her place among the French *émigrés* who, as we learn from M. de Reiset's work upon Louise d'Esparbès, comtesse de Polastron, were not likely to object to the relations existing between the elderly duke and the sprightly young English-woman. The duke was most generous to his dear Sophie, for we find that in the year 1812 he began to allow her 20,000 francs (£800) per annum as pin-money.

The duc de Bourbon returned to France in 1814 and in the following year made his futile attempt to arouse la Vendée from her lethargy. On his return to his native land, the duc de Bourbon, who had separated from his wife, lived with his father, the prince de Condé ; these two gentle-



## Sophie Dawes

men passed most of their time on their estates, either at Chantilly or at Saint-Leu. The prince de Condé, who was now a very old man and nearly always half asleep under his white wig and *catogan*, still indulged in all the ridiculous whims and prejudices peculiar to the little band of nobles who had once fought under his command.

“He revered the word emigration as if it were a household god,” says M. Raoul Arnaud in his life of *Madame Adélaïde d'Orléans*. “He was not quite certain as to whether he had ever had a grandson or not; he only knew that his family had somehow inherited the glory of a long-departed Condé whose name he could no longer remember.”

He called King Louis XVIII *M. de Provence* and still bore him spite because he had not been one of the first to emigrate. Like his son, the duc de Bourbon, his chief passion had been hunting. Chateaubriand, in his *Mémoires d'Outre-tombe*, tells us that the duc de Bourbon's days began with the barking of hounds and ended with the flourish of hunting-horns. From the fact that Sophie did not accompany her lover on his return to his native land we may suppose that a breach had come between the pair.

Before settling down at Chantilly, the duke made a short tour in Spain; it was his desire

## Feminine Wiles

to break with Sophie and he evidently took this little trip in order to forget her and make any reconciliation impossible. But this expedition was as unsuccessful as his campaign in la Vendée, for, on his return to Paris in September, 1815, he found Sophie waiting for him and more than anxious to be reinstalled in her old position.

Four years had wrought a great change in Sophie ; although she was never able to conceal certain traits of coarseness, she had learnt tact, was a perfect little diplomatist and could mop her eyes with a muslin rag to perfection. No spoiled child could pout so prettily or smile so divinely as Sophie. And then she had made up her mind to reconquer her lover and her lost position.

She wrote letter after letter protesting that she could not bear to be parted from her " dearest friend " and her " poor dear," as she always called him even in her French letters.

Sophie had not come alone and unprotected to Paris whither so many of her compatriots, including Grace Dalrymple Elliott, Louise Murphy, *la Murphise*, the mysterious Mme. Brown (the duc de Berry's mistress), Mrs. Atkins, etc., etc., had turned their steps in the hope of captivating some elderly noble and had returned, with much wealth and a halo of mystery around their heads,

## Sophie Dawes

to die in their native land. No, she took care to have some protector at hand, lest her little plans for recapture should fail. She was accompanied by a Mr. Barry, of whom nothing is known except that she was treated with a certain amount of respect as long as she remained under his protection. Sophie ever seems to have been her own enemy, owing to the fact that she was unable to control her temper ; having, on one occasion, tried the patience of her landlady, Mme. Parisot, a little too far, she was forced to seek other quarters.

She then took up her abode in the house of a Mme. Maillard at No. 5, rue Lepelletier ; here she only remained a short time and then went to lodge in a house on the Quai Malaquais, No. 7.

For nearly eighteen months she waited in Paris in the expectation that the duc de Bourbon would take her back into favour. However, another fair daughter of Albion, a certain Miss Harris, possibly a more handsome and less ambitious person than Sophie Dawes, had usurped the latter's position—but only for a time.

Sophie must have gone through a good deal of mental anxiety during those eighteen months ; she was playing her last card, and the idea of being obliged to return to the horrible life from which her connection with the duke had saved her

## Recapture of the Duke

must have been an awful one indeed. History does not say whether Mr. Barry remained in Paris all the time she was waiting for the duke to show signs of growing weary of Miss Harris. At last she wrote the duke a letter so full of affectionate terms and tender reproaches that he imprudently replied to it and then came in person to see her ; the visit was repeated not once, but many times.

When Sophie thought that she had regained all her old power over him, she suggested that he should give her her former position ; this he consented to do, provided that she could conceal her identity under another name. In short, he proposed that she should marry. Sophie was quite willing, nay, delighted. She had long ago set her heart upon being presented at the court of Louis XVIII, and this could only be accomplished by a marriage with someone who would be blind enough—or sharp enough to see that it was to his interest to shut his eyes—to act as a screen. It is better not to inquire too deeply into the duke's reasons for wishing to give the sprightly Sophie in marriage. His conduct as a husband and as a father (in the case of his daughter, Mme. de Rully<sup>1</sup>)

<sup>1</sup> This lady was the duke's illegitimate daughter, the child of a dancer at the Opera named Mlle. Michelon, who went by the nickname of Mimi. The child was christened Adèle, was educated by the duc de Bourbon and married to the comte de

## Sophie Dawes

was neither that of a Christian nor of a gentleman.

Sophie, having ascertained the duke's terms, set about looking for a husband. This would not be difficult, she said, when she confided to the duke that she had already had one offer of marriage in 1817, but that she had not accepted the proposal. It must be confessed that she laid her plans uncommonly well and displayed a wonderful knowledge of her fellow-creatures' little foibles. Having given herself out as the natural daughter of no less a personage than the duc de Bourbon, prince de Condé, she was received with open arms by a certain set of would-be leaders of fashion. The wife of a Colonel — swore that she would find her a husband, and a husband was found in the person of Adrien Victor de Feuchères, an officer in the Royal Guard and credulous enough to please anybody.

Rully or Reuilly. The *Archives Nationales* in Paris possess a letter from Adèle's mother to the duke in which she thanks him for his care of her child.

"I shall forget all the wrong you have done me ; that wrong is repaired since it is to you that our child owes her happiness. I will never speak of it again, and I shall only remember what I suffered in order to realize my present happiness. . . .

" *January 20th, 1804.*

" L. MIMI."

M. and Mme. de Rully lived with the duke and were treated by him with the greatest kindness until Mme. de Feuchères forced her lover to drive them away. Mme. de Rully had her own suite of apartments at Chantilly and a fine hôtel in the rue Monsieur, Paris.



*Photo Neurdein*

**THE DUC DE BOURBON**

*From the portrait at the Musée Condé, Chantilly, by Pierre Danloux*



## Her Marriage

Before returning to England, Sophie, in order to make her marriage legal in France, on June 4th, 1818, announced at the *mairie* of the *arrondissement* in which she was then living her approaching union with M. de Feuchères. In this document she calls herself Mme. Sophie Clarck [*sic*], widow of William Dawes and daughter of Richard Clarck and Jeanne Walker his wife; she gives her address at No. 9, rue Neuve des Capucines, Paris.

She then went over to London, from whence she wrote a letter to her duke, dated July 25th, 1818, in which she said: "I am only awaiting the arrival of M. de Feuchères to conclude this important matter."

To this man Sophie was accordingly married on August 16th, 1818, with Catholic rites in the Spanish Chapel, now the Roman Catholic church of St. James in Spanish Place, and with Protestant rites (as Sophie had not changed her religion at that time) in the church of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, London. The duke, having given his consent to this shameless transaction, presented the bride, his supposed daughter, with a dowry of 140,000 francs (£5600). When Sophie, in the previous year, had been about to receive adult baptism, the register of Saint Helens was searched but no record of her birth could be found. So when she, in her



## Sophie Dawes

marriage settlement, represented herself as being three years younger than she really was, there was no one to enlighten the witnesses as to the real facts of the case. Likewise, when she described herself as the daughter of Richard Clark and of the widow of a William Dawes, no one contradicted her, subsequent events proving that it was to the interest of such members of her family as were still alive to keep their tongues behind their teeth.

In the following year M. de Feuchères was given the title of baron and was made aide-de-camp to his wife's lover. For four years he proved himself to be utterly devoid of observation.

The *ménage à trois* now returned to France where the duke took up his abode, choosing Chantilly as his favourite residence; of course the amiable aide-de-camp and his charming spouse were given a suite of rooms under the same roof. As time went on, the baron's blind faith in the virtue of the fair Sophie began to waver; whenever he hinted that she was not careful enough of her reputation, she calmed his suspicions by reminding him that she was the duke's daughter and as such she had a right to see him wherever and whenever she liked.

There is no doubt that Sophie, during the first few months of her married life, tried to bewitch

## A Favourite Pastime

her husband, the duke and the heterogeneous medley of hangers-on of both sexes which frequented Chantilly.

Sophie, having got what she wanted, was now supremely happy : she had been received into the charmed circle of royal favour and was at liberty to pay her duty to her sovereign whenever she wished to do so.

One of Sophie's favourite pastimes was acting ; she delighted to play *ingénue* parts, and this notwithstanding the fact that she was now far more fitted to play the " heavy lady." She never hesitated to throw up her part at the last moment if she fancied it did not suit her or if she had grown tired of it ; she would never learn her lines properly. Her previous experience of stage-life had probably taught her the efficacy of kicking the prompter in order to make him remember to come to her aid—which, owing to her indolence, was pretty often.

Of course the duke was invited to see the baroness disporting herself as an innocent little shepherdess in a flowered muslin gown and a Leghorn hat covered with pink rosebuds and forget-me-nots. On one occasion, his birthday was celebrated by the performance of a piece entitled *Le Comédien d'Etampes*, when Sophie sang the following verses in his honour :—

## Sophie Dawes

“ Si d'un prince que nous chérissons  
Le respect fait taire l'éloge,  
Ça n'fait rien, on dit son nom  
Dans le parterre et dans les loges  
Et les cœurs à l'unisson  
Disent : vivent les Bourbons ! ”

The poem—or rather doggerel—was well worthy of the person to whom it was dedicated ; we are not surprised to learn that the prince frequently dropped off to sleep during the first act of these exhibitions of mediocre talent and slept peacefully until it was time for him to wake up and applaud.

Mme. de Feuchères' reign as Queen of Chantilly was not all peace : the villagers disliked the woman for her haughty manners and gave vent to their spite by throwing stones at her carriage-windows. The memory of certain events, which had happened not so very long ago, must have been still fresh in the minds of many.

The servants at the *château* also looked upon the baroness with disfavour ; they, too, felt the lash of her tongue and hated her for it. They only consented to wait upon her because they knew that she was mistress in more ways than one. Certain little traits of avarice had already begun to appear ; Sophie, suspecting her servants of stealing her firewood, insisted upon keeping

## Unpunctual Habits

the wood-box in her dressing-room, so that she might keep her eye upon it and see that none was wasted. These habits of suspicion increased until she would allow no stranger to go into her private apartments, but kept the key in her pocket or under her mattress.

Scenes of anger and even violence were not rare ; on one occasion she flung a coffee-pot full of boiling water at the head of her own maid, whereupon the latter seized the fire-tongs and brandished them in her mistress's face.

The long hours spent at her toilet-table accounted for her unpunctual habits. Guests who had been invited to dine at Chantilly were frequently kept waiting until eight o'clock (a very late hour in those days), when the doors of the *salon* would be thrown open and the baronne de Feuchères would appear leaning upon the duke's arm and followed by her lamb-like husband. Now the duke, as an old soldier, loved punctuality above all things ; the rare occasions when he plucked up sufficient courage to order dinner to be served without waiting for the baroness were marked by fits of hysterics on that amiable lady's part.

Sophie soon developed a passion for gambling at cards, a forerunner of her little ventures on the Stock Exchange. Like most women, she did not

## Sophie Dawes

like having to pay when she lost. Although the prince himself enjoyed a game of cards, his advanced years were beginning to tell upon him and he frequently snored during those interminable *robbers* of whist,<sup>1</sup> as they were called in France at that time.

“Go to bed!” Sophie would say. “We can get on very well without you!”

At last, after four years of married life, four years of servitude to the baron de Feuchères, the latter determined to rid himself of his too fascinating wife. During a very stormy interview which took place in 1822, he informed her that he had discovered that she was deceiving him—it had taken him four years to ascertain that fact!—and that he had had enough of her and her code of morality. But Sophie had no intention of letting her dupe go so easily; she cajoled him, called herself the innocent victim of jealous slanderers, and tried the same old tricks which, for the last four years, had never failed to calm his suspicions. Then, finding that he was determined to obtain his freedom, she flew into a fearful passion, screamed out that she was not the duke’s daughter but his mistress, called him a fool for being so blind and

<sup>1</sup> The word whist, like the name of Dawes, presents dangerous pitfalls to Sophie’s unwary biographers, one of whom terms the game *wisk*, probably pronounced *visk*.

## Thrashed by Her Husband

began to beat him with her clenched fists. The baron, like many a placid-tempered man, could become furious when thoroughly aroused ; he seized his riding-whip to protect himself from her fury, and then thrashed her until the duke rushed into the room and separated them. M. de Feuchères hastened off to the prince's secretary, flung his wife's dowry on the table and left the palace for ever. In a heart-broken missive addressed to the duke, his master, he said : " I beg *Monseigneur* to have the goodness to realize the cruel position in which I am placed and to give me back my honour or allow me to refuse to accept any more of his favours."

This unexpectedly energetic behaviour disconcerted the duke whose comfort was thereby compromised. So strange is the heart of man, it is quite possible that he secretly regretted the departure of his short-sighted but faithful aide-de-camp. And then he realized that he no longer had any excuse to keep Mrs. Sophie under his roof. He therefore sent her away for a few days ; however, it was not long before she was back again at Chantilly and reinstalled in her old position.

The last few years had taught the duke that Sophie was indispensable to his happiness ; he determined to write to his aide-de-camp in order

## Sophie Dawes

to try and induce him to return and to resume the old chain of servitude ; to obtain this result, he wrote the following letter :—

“ MY DEAR FEUCHÈRES—for never will I cease to call you anything but the truest, the most honourable, the most loyal friend in the whole world—in God’s name, for your mother’s sake, for the sake of all you hold dearest on earth, come and see me for a few minutes. This visit will not bind you in any way whatsoever, and you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are comforting the heart of a friend overwhelmed by many and various misfortunes. Do not fear that you will meet your wife : the poor unhappy creature is ill in bed and knows nothing of this letter which I am now writing to you. Come, come, my dear friend ; come and talk the matter over with your well-wisher.”

But the good baron’s eyes had been opened once and for all. He knew his wife too well to count upon her promises of fidelity and submission, and he lived to thank Heaven that he had freed himself from her chains while he could still do so with honour to himself : he absolutely refused to see either her or his late master.

His one desire was to leave France where he had been so singularly unfortunate and to forget his unhappy married life.

## Retirement of the Baron

In 1824, he wrote a letter of adieu to his former master, in which he said :—

“ I consider myself from this moment, *Monseigneur*, as having ceased to belong to Your Highness’s household which, for everybody’s honour and peace of mind, it would have been better if I had never entered.”

He then wrote as follows to the War Office, begging that he might be given a post in the *Armée d’Espagne* (which post he obtained immediately):—

“ I realize the necessity of revealing my past life to you. I swear upon my honour that all the details which I am now going to impart to Your Excellency are perfectly true. When I married Mlle. Sophie Dawes, she wrote me a letter informing me that His Serene Highness, the duc de Bourbon, had brought her up and had paid for her education, and that she had every reason to believe that she was his daughter. On the occasion of my first interview with that prince, which interview took place shortly before my marriage, he replied to certain questions which I ventured to put to him and said that he had known this lady from her infancy, that she was worthy to become the wife of an honourable man and that he would allow her the sum of 7200 francs (£288) per annum. . . . Several years passed and then, in consequence of a domestic quarrel, I learned



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from Mme. de Feuchères' own lips that she was not the daughter of the duc de Bourbon, as she had been pleased to make me believe, but his mistress. This assertion explained certain rumours. . . ."

Louis XVIII, on hearing of this scandal, forbade Sophie to appear at court. It was not until the year 1829 that, after long years of suspense and much mental suffering caused by the scandalous revelations made by several witnesses, the baron de Feuchères obtained a judicial separation from his erring spouse.

But we must now revert to the period immediately following the breach between M. and Mme. de Feuchères.

It was a terrible blow to Sophie's pride when she heard that she would not be allowed to appear at court in future ; she had done so much to obtain that favour and now it was wrested from her almost before she had had time to enjoy it. During the next few months of her life she thought of nothing but trying to recover her lost position. We may safely say that the refusal of Louis XVIII to allow her to appear at court heralded a long period of misery and trouble for the duc de Bourbon ; he was never to know peace again.

One day a member of Mme. de Feuchères'

## An Indiscreet Speech

household called upon an officer in the service of the duchesse de Berry and, during the course of the conversation, mentioned the name of his mistress. Of the latter he said :

“ She has been judged very harshly and subjected to cruel treatment. The fact that she is not allowed to appear at court has caused her the keenest anguish. If, by any means, the memory of this scandal could be effaced, if the baroness could be readmitted to court, and if *Madame*<sup>1</sup> would deign to use her influence, I think I am authorized to say that Mme. de Feuchères would take care to show her gratitude. The duke is now an old man ; Mme. de Feuchères’ influence over him is greater than ever and, as you are well aware, the house of Condé is wealthy. The duc de Bordeaux is already provided for : he will inherit the throne of France. But such is not the case with *Mademoiselle*.<sup>2</sup> . . . ”

This indiscreet speech received the answer it deserved : the baroness’s envoy was informed that, not only was he unauthorized to broach such a subject, but that anyone mentioning the matter to the duchesse de Berry would run the risk of

<sup>1</sup> *Madame* : the duchesse de Berry, daughter of the king of Naples (1798–1870).

<sup>2</sup> *Mademoiselle* : Louise Marie Thérèse, eldest child of the duc and duchesse de Berry (1819–1864), married to the duc de Parme in 1845.

## Sophie Dawes

incurring her displeasure. The latter, on being informed that same evening of this extraordinary interview and proposal, approved of the reply and said that *she wished to hear no more about the matter.*

Early in the spring of this same year, 1822, Sophie, nothing daunted, presented herself at the Tuileries arrayed in her court robes ; but to her astonishment, the gentleman-usher refused to allow her to enter the king's presence, adding that he was acting under the commands of Louis XVIII.

Baffled for the first time in her remarkable career, Sophie now turned her attention to the d'Orléans family. The duc d'Orléans of that time (later Louis-Philippe) had already six children and no prospect of inheriting the throne of France. Politics had estranged the duc de Bourbon and the son of Philippe-Egalité, and the last of the Condés found it wellnigh impossible to feign interest in the doings of his family's enemy. Sophie now conceived a plan by which she hoped to obtain possession of her lover's fortune, *or as much of it as his relations would allow her to take without making too many objections ;* for she knew perfectly well that if he left her his entire fortune, all his relatives would be up in arms against her and would declare that she had exercised undue influence over him. To obtain her



SOPHIE DAWES

*From a miniature by an unknown artist in the Musée Condé,  
Chantilly*



## Plot for Readmission to Court

end, she addressed herself to the duc d'Orléans, the son of the regicide Philippe-Egalité of whom Danton said : " The mere thought of that villain makes me feel sick ! "

On the birth of the duc d'Aumale in 1822, Sophie wrote to the duc d'Orléans suggesting that she should persuade the duc de Bourbon to stand godfather to the baby prince : as a reward for this little act of kindness, the duc d'Orléans was to endeavour to obtain her readmission to court. The duc d'Orléans accepted her terms without any demur ; he would not feel obliged to take any trouble in the matter ; his part of the bargain was scarcely worth mentioning : it only meant that he would have to put in a word for Mme. de Feuchères whenever an opportunity occurred to do so.

At first the duc de Bourbon refused to have anything to do with the little prince ; but at last, after much hesitation and a good deal of grumbling, he consented to stand godfather, on condition that he was not expected to do anything more for the child.

The baptism of the infant duc d'Aumale was the signal for a long series of fêtes. Mme. de Feuchères had persuaded her lover to write a letter to the baby's father, stating that several ladies belonging to his household were extremely

## Sophie Dawes

had dared to act without first consulting his wishes on the subject, expressed his opinion of her conduct in pretty strong terms. However, as the invitation had already been despatched—and, what is more, accepted—good-breeding forced him to put a cheerful face on the matter and to receive the unwished-for guest as if he himself had sent the invitation.

M. Sosthène de la Rochefoucauld tells us in his memoirs that the duc d'Orléans arrived carrying a huge bouquet of roses which, after having saluted the prince, he placed with an elaborate bow at the feet of the fair mistress of the *château*.

Sophie now turned her attention towards obtaining honours and riches for her family. It cannot be denied that she did her best for her nephew and niece, both of whom had lately come to reside with her. But we must look at the practical side of the question—Sophie was always practical and had always been so except in the episode of the water-carrier—and her object in having them to live with her was probably that they might spy upon the movements of the duke, her lover. A few million francs secured the title of baron to her nephew, James Dawes, who in future was to be known to history as the baron de Flassans, from a domain of that name in Provence which his royal benefactor bestowed

## Death of the Duchesse de Bourbon

upon him together with an important post in his household. Sophie provided equally well for her niece, or the person whom she called her niece, as we shall see later on.

It was on January 10th, 1822, that a pale shadow passed away for ever out of the life of the duc de Bourbon. For thirty-five years Marie Thérèse Bathilde d'Orléans had lived separated from her husband ; so when death came to summon her from a world in which she had suffered many disillusions and committed not a few follies, her death made but little impression upon the last of the Condés. Born July 9th, 1750, the daughter of Philippe d'Orléans and the duchesse de Chartres married the young duc de Bourbon in 1770, he being fourteen and she twenty years of age at the time. Such an ill-assorted marriage was bound to prove a failure notwithstanding the fact that the young couple were very much in love with each other during the honeymoon.

The duke soon wearied of his wife ; before eighteen months were over she had good cause to regret having married the duke. Ten years later they separated never to meet again. The Revolution could not reunite this couple who had once been so devoted to each other ; and though she wrote to him when he was an exile in a foreign land offering to share what remained of her fortune



## Sophie Dawes

with him, he would not accept her generous proposal. Even the death of their son, the duc d'Enghien, who had not been so dutiful to his mother as he might have been, was powerless to unite the pair.

In her desire to forget her grief, the duchesse de Bourbon adopted many foolish ideas ; by turns theosophist, melomaniac, sick-nurse, she, a believer in Mesmer and a fervent admirer of Napoleon, never found the waters of Lethe. With what bitterness did she not cry : " I have seen everything, learnt everything, loved everything and now I am weary of everything."

And again : " I am like a squirrel in its cage ; it is always running, running ; it thinks it has run a very long way, when all the time it has only been running in a circle."

What an admission when she said to one of her few friends : " You do not know how unhappy I have been, and how unhappy I still am. I loved my husband ; sometimes I think I still love him : I loved him with an unreasonable, boundless passion ; he rewarded me with an unreasonable, boundless contempt like my love for him ! "

And yet she had one good friend on her side, for the duc de Bourbon's sister, Louise Adélaïde de Condé, was fond of her poor ill-treated sister-in-law and tried on many occasions to reconcile

## Queen of Chantilly

the pair. When the duc de Bourbon talked of divorcing his wife and marrying again, Louise de Condé wrote to him and tried to dissuade him from inflicting this last and most horrible indignity upon his wife, the mother of his only son, the duc d'Enghien.

We must confess that the duc d'Orléans and Marie-Amélie treated her very well ; perhaps they thought that she would be able to regain her influence over her husband ; but that was impossible—the duke was not to be won by fidelity and submission.

Throughout those long years of separation, the duke and duchess continued to correspond with each other from time to time ; her letters, filled with affectionate terms such as “ monster ” and “ cruel creature,” make interesting reading to the student of human nature.

Immediately after her death, the duc de Bourbon was advised to marry again in the hope that he might still have a son to take the place of the unhappy duc d'Enghien ; a Saxon princess was even mentioned as being of suitable age and possessed of sufficient wealth.

But the chain of habit was already too firmly riveted to be broken asunder and Sophie, in future, was to reign as Queen of Chantilly over the hearth and home of the last of the Condés.

## CHAPTER II

Sophie becomes Queen of Chantilly—The duke's illness—Society at Chantilly—Coronation of Charles X—Scheme for adoption of a prince as residuary legatee—Meetings between the duc d'Orléans and the duc de Bourbon—*Donations entre-vifs*—Sophie again tries to get admitted to court—The duc de Bourbon refuses to make his will.

**M**ME. DE FEUCHÈRES was now Queen of Chantilly and mistress of the situation; she began to complete her subjection of her elderly lover, and she was aided in her task by a lucky accident. In 1823 the duke was riding a black mare, a present from Sophie, when the animal was startled by a wild boar and threw its rider who broke his thigh and was obliged to keep his bed for nearly a month. On this occasion, Mme. de Feuchères took possession of the sick-room and its occupant, whom she fed as if he were a child and waited upon him hand and foot. During the course of this illness, which seems to have been very severe, the duke revealed to his faithful valet, Manoury, a certain secret which he had already confided to Sir William Gordon, the prince-regent's equerry,



CHÂTEAU DE CHANTILLY, BEFORE ITS DESTRUCTION  
*From an old print*

## Sophie Dawes

anxious to witness the baptismal ceremony. In this letter he said :—

“ You kindly authorize me to bring whoever I like. You have already been good enough to invite Mme. de Rully (his illegitimate daughter). Three other ladies belonging to my household : Mesdames de Quesnay, de Feuchères and de Choulot, all of whom, although they have been presented at court, have not yet had the honour to be presented to yourself and to the princesses, are very anxious to witness the ceremony. . . . If it is not contrary to etiquette, you would do them great honour, and it would be the happiest day in their lives, if you and the princesses would allow them to accompany me.”

The duc d'Orléans had anticipated this request ; of course he begged the baby's godfather to bring whoever he liked and assured him that he and his wife would always be pleased to welcome anyone his relative might wish to introduce to them. Accordingly Mme. la baronne de Feuchères, splendidly attired, made her first appearance at the Palais-Royal where she was kindly received by the duchesse d'Orléans and Mme. Adélaïde, the sister of the duc d'Orléans.

On hearing a rumour that the notorious Mme. de Feuchères had been received at the Palais-Royal, the Dauphine (the duchesse d'Angoulême)

## The d'Orléans Family

questioned the duchesse d'Orléans as to the real facts of the case.

When the latter let out that, not only had Mme. de Feuchères been received at the Palais-Royal, but that she had actually dared to call upon the duchess at Neuilly, the Dauphine asked in her usual sharp, abrupt tones :

“ I hope you did not receive that woman ? ”

“ No,” stammered the duchesse d'Orléans, too frightened to do anything but lie ; “ no, my husband received her.”

Not only had she received Mme. de Feuchères, but she and her sister-in-law, Mme. Adélaïde, had even gone the length of petting and kissing their would-be benefactress.

It may safely be said that the conduct of the d'Orléans family was invariably contrary to the wishes and designs of Louis XVIII and Charles X. The life led by the future Louis-Philippe at the Palais-Royal differed but little from that of most wealthy families in France at that time. The king that was to be prided himself upon his liberal tendencies ; in order to curry favour with the populace, whose loyalty to Louis XVIII was partly a case of francs and sous, he purchased numerous pictures representing victories won under the flag of the Republic, subscribed to all the liberal newspapers of the day and bestowed

## Sophie Dawes

anxious to witness the baptismal ceremony. In this letter he said :—

“ You kindly authorize me to bring whoever I like. You have already been good enough to invite Mme. de Rully (his illegitimate daughter). Three other ladies belonging to my household : Mesdames de Quesnay, de Feuchères and de Choulot, all of whom, although they have been presented at court, have not yet had the honour to be presented to yourself and to the princesses, are very anxious to witness the ceremony. . . . If it is not contrary to etiquette, you would do them great honour, and it would be the happiest day in their lives, if you and the princesses would allow them to accompany me.”

The duc d'Orléans had anticipated this request ; of course he begged the baby's godfather to bring whoever he liked and assured him that he and his wife would always be pleased to welcome anyone his relative might wish to introduce to them. Accordingly Mme. la baronne de Feuchères, splendidly attired, made her first appearance at the Palais-Royal where she was kindly received by the duchesse d'Orléans and Mme. Adélaïde, the sister of the duc d'Orléans.

On hearing a rumour that the notorious Mme. de Feuchères had been received at the Palais-Royal, the Dauphine (the duchesse d'Angoulême)

## The d'Orléans Family

questioned the duchesse d'Orléans as to the real facts of the case.

When the latter let out that, not only had Mme. de Feuchères been received at the Palais-Royal, but that she had actually dared to call upon the duchess at Neuilly, the Dauphine asked in her usual sharp, abrupt tones :

“ I hope you did not receive that woman ? ”

“ No,” stammered the duchesse d'Orléans, too frightened to do anything but lie ; “ no, my husband received her.”

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largess whenever he thought that he could safely expect a reward for his liberalities ; but when he went the length of announcing his intention of sending his son, the young duc de Chartres, to attend the classes at the Collège Henri IV in November, 1819, Louis XVIII could scarcely believe the fact and despatched M. Decazes to Neuilly to ask whether the duc d'Orléans really intended to allow his son to mingle with the young *bourgeois* of France. On learning that such was the duc d'Orléans' intention, Louis XVIII sent word begging him to come to the Tuileries. During the interview, the duc d'Orléans stuck to his guns and swore that nothing would make him alter his decision which was irrevocable.

Whereupon Louis XVIII flew into a violent passion and ordered him to consult the duchesse d'Orléans upon the matter. Marie-Amélie, whose wifely docility and motherly virtues might well be copied by the shrieking sisterhood of England who are the laughing-stock of all civilized nations, wrote back to Louis XVIII that same evening, saying that " duty as well as her own personal feelings compelled her to defer to her husband's wishes," and adding, " that she was convinced that it would be to her son's advantage to attend a public school at least for some time." Not only did the duc de Chartres become a pupil of the

## The Duke's Love of Sport

Collège Henri IV, where he remained six years, but his brothers also followed his example and finished their studies there.

Sophie was not satisfied with her success and she tried in every way to tighten the bond with which she hoped to bind the d'Orléans family to the last of the Condés—and to herself.

On the occasion of the feast of Saint Hubert, she took upon herself to invite the duc d'Orléans to come and hunt at Chantilly without first obtaining the owner's leave! The duc de Bourbon's favourite occupations were hunting and shooting; in fact he seems to have lived for sport, and it was the one thing in which he displayed any interest. It was said that he was always very generous towards his farmer-neighbours in the matter of giving compensation for damage done to their land during the hunting-season.

Now although the duc d'Orléans was by no means so devoted to sport as his elderly relative, he hastened to accept the invitation in the hope that the visit would make the duc de Bourbon more inclined to be friendly. It was but a forlorn hope, for the old gentleman's evident reluctance to stand godfather to the baby duc d'Aumale must have shown him that he must not expect much from him in the future.

The duc de Bourbon, on learning that Sophie

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had dared to act without first consulting his wishes on the subject, expressed his opinion of her conduct in pretty strong terms. However, as the invitation had already been despatched—and, what is more, accepted—good-breeding forced him to put a cheerful face on the matter and to receive the unwished-for guest as if he himself had sent the invitation.

M. Sosthène de la Rochefoucauld tells us in his memoirs that the duc d'Orléans arrived carrying a huge bouquet of roses which, after having saluted the prince, he placed with an elaborate bow at the feet of the fair mistress of the *château*.

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## Death of the Duchesse de Bourbon

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The duke soon wearied of his wife ; before eighteen months were over she had good cause to regret having married the duke. Ten years later they separated never to meet again. The Revolution could not reunite this couple who had once been so devoted to each other ; and though she wrote to him when he was an exile in a foreign land offering to share what remained of her fortune

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In her desire to forget her grief, the duchesse de Bourbon adopted many foolish ideas ; by turns theosophist, melomaniac, sick-nurse, she, a believer in Mesmer and a fervent admirer of Napoleon, never found the waters of Lethe. With what bitterness did she not cry : " I have seen everything, learnt everything, loved everything and now I am weary of everything."

And again : " I am like a squirrel in its cage ; it is always running, running ; it thinks it has run a very long way, when all the time it has only been running in a circle."

What an admission when she said to one of her few friends : " You do not know how unhappy I have been, and how unhappy I still am. I loved my husband ; sometimes I think I still love him : I loved him with an unreasonable, boundless passion ; he rewarded me with an unreasonable, boundless contempt like my love for him ! "

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## Queen of Chantilly

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We must confess that the duc d'Orléans and Marie-Amélie treated her very well ; perhaps they thought that she would be able to regain her influence over her husband ; but that was impossible—the duke was not to be won by fidelity and submission.

Throughout those long years of separation, the duke and duchess continued to correspond with each other from time to time ; her letters, filled with affectionate terms such as “ monster ” and “ cruel creature,” make interesting reading to the student of human nature.

Immediately after her death, the duc de Bourbon was advised to marry again in the hope that he might still have a son to take the place of the unhappy duc d'Enghien ; a Saxon princess was even mentioned as being of suitable age and possessed of sufficient wealth.

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## CHAPTER II

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CHÂTEAU DE CHANTILLY, BEFORE ITS DESTRUCTION  
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## A Family Secret

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## A Pathetic Appeal

tions with the baronne de Feuchères, had become very strained between the brother and sister; so estranged were they now that the princess had almost ceased to write to her brother. However, on hearing that he intended to purchase Saint-Leu, the abbess wrote one more letter beseeching him to break with his mistress before it was too late. Her letter ended with these words :

“ In God’s name, do not let Saint-Leu become in your old age the haunt of . . . I know not of whom, nor of what. But you know what I mean, so I need say no more. Adieu, oh, you who ever were, still are, and always shall be the well-beloved of my heart ! ”

We can judge of the affection that once united the brother and sister from the extraordinary fact that the duke had dared to ask his sister to be godmother to his illegitimate daughter, Adèle—however this she refused to do.<sup>1</sup>

The princess Louise Adélaïde herself said in

<sup>1</sup> The affection must have been rather one-sided ; for when Louis XVIII was obliged to take his memorable journey to Ghent, the duc de Bourbon went with him and left his sister sick and alone to take care of herself in Paris which was then in a very disturbed state. The lover of her youth, M. de la Gervaisais, was the only person who thought of her in those troublous times ; it was he who warned her of coming danger and helped in her escape to England.



## Sophie Dawes

excuse for her brother's utter lack of morality that "he was really good at heart, but that he had been shockingly badly brought up." Their letters to one another before the advent of Sophie Dawes were full of affectionate terms, he calling her his *bonne*, as he had done in the days of their childhood, and she calling him *mon petit, mon petit capitaine*, etc.

Needless to say, Saint-Leu was purchased. Sophie probably induced her lover to buy the estate with a view to persuading him to give it to her, either during his lifetime or after his death—which he did.

The society which frequented the *salons* of Saint-Leu and Chantilly was not exactly select. Although the duc de Bourbon's wife had been a d'Orléans, he had always held aloof from the court of Louis XVIII. The presence of such time-servers as Fouché, Talleyrand and Co. (not to mention the scoundrels who had helped to compass the ruin of the young duc d'Enghien) was not calculated to induce him to return to a court where he felt he was not wanted. And then he would probably have been greatly bored if he had resumed his former position.

The court of Louis XVIII, as presided over by the duchesse d'Angoulême, was a very different court from that of her parents.

## Society at Chantilly

We will now quote a word-picture of society at Chantilly from the pen of M. de Puymaigre :

“Society at Chantilly was composed of *M. le duc*’s household, of the prince de Rohan, who was afterwards duped of his inheritance, and of several Englishmen and their wives. The manners of these people were rather free and easy—but then the prince set the example. I well remember that he recommended me to make love to one of these *Anglaises* who, he said, would be delighted to receive my attentions. I thought so myself, but she was not young enough to make me wish to go any farther in the matter. The real *châtelaine* who occupied the post of honour, if one can imagine anything honourable about her, was the baronne de Feuchères, the duc de B——’s mistress; she was exactly like a stout, rather fresh-looking cook and would have disgusted any decent fellow at the end of three days. She did a good deal of good with the prince’s money, hoping, thereby, to make people forgive her for her scandalous position as the duke’s paid mistress at the *château* of Chantilly. She took me to see the almshouses which had been endowed by the great Condé in the latter town and in which she took great interest. I did my best to encourage her in this good work, because good works *are* good works and remain so, no matter who their author may be. . . .”

In this same year, 1824, Sophie, confident that

## Sophie Dawes

her power over her elderly lover was so strong that nothing could withstand it, made him sign a will leaving her the estates of Saint-Leu and Boissy, and authorizing her to enjoy the rents from these two domains during his lifetime. Not content with this magnificent gift she, in the following year, persuaded him to increase this legacy by sums of money amounting to one million francs.

She seized everything she could lay her hands upon. On one occasion the duke having expressed his intention of selling a number of valuable horses, Sophie, ever on the look-out for her little perquisites, teased and coaxed him to give them to her as a proof of his affection for her.

Sophie was not a favourite with the French nation ; she had two faults, two very great failings in the eyes of the people : she was English—and therefore “ a foreigner,” and she was haughty in her manner. She was perfectly well aware of this dislike ; but her faith in her own charms was such that she thought that she need only show herself in public and everyone would fall down and worship her. One evening she took it into her head that she should like to go to the theatre ; so she engaged a box at the *Théâtre Français* and appeared there in company with some children and her lady's maid. Sophie, in

## An Unpleasant Reception

her desire to impress the audience, had arrayed her mature charms in a robe of that peculiar colour called *ventre de biche* ; her head was enclosed in a magnificent turban of red tulle. Of course every opera-glass was levelled towards the box when this resplendent vision appeared, and then everyone asked his neighbour who *she* was. When it was known that the stout lady in a scarlet turban was the notorious Mme. de Feuchères, a chorus of hisses rose from the pit. Whereupon she hastened to leave her seat and retreated to the back of the box. Her clumsy movements excited fresh hilarity. The pit, thinking that she had withdrawn because she was ashamed of herself, then began to applaud. At the end of the first piece, Sophie imagined that she had been forgotten and ventured to return to her former place ; but she was again hissed and finally obliged to leave the theatre.

The dislike was mutual. Sophie had never liked or understood the French and she took care to let them know it. One day, while seated at dinner between two members of parliament, she spoke her mind very freely concerning a certain recent event. Her remarks were received in silence. At length one of the duke's guests could stand her interference no longer and ventured to contradict her ; this he did with such effect that

## Sophie Dawes

Sophie, finding that she had met her match, retorted :

“ Do you know, *monsieur*, that you are guilty of very impolite conduct towards *Monseigneur* ? ”

Here the duke for once broke through his rule of silence and plucked up sufficient courage to express his opinion. With a bitter smile he turned to the mistress of the house and said :

“ Do not force me to speak my mind, *madame*, for the gratitude which I owe to England cannot be compared with my love for my own country.”

In the month of August, 1824, Sophie went to spend some weeks at Aix-les-Bains where she seems to have enjoyed herself in her own way, for she writes on August 10th :—

“ While you are hunting, *dearest* (sic), I, too, am hunting kings, queens and princesses : you know that I have a great *weakness* for such personages.”

There was still one person who stood in Sophie's way at Chantilly and made her feel that her sway was not altogether sure. That person was Adèle, comtesse de Rully<sup>1</sup> (or Reuilly as some write it), the duc de Bourbon's illegitimate daughter whom he had had carefully educated.

This Adèle was a truly good creature and was

<sup>1</sup> See footnote on page 17 concerning further particulars of Adèle de Rully.

## Sophie and the Duke's Daughter

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The court of Louis XVIII, as presided over by the duchesse d'Angoulême, was a very different court from that of her parents.

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We will now quote a word-picture of society at Chantilly from the pen of M. de Puymaigre :

“ Society at Chantilly was composed of *M. le duc*’s household, of the prince de Rohan, who was afterwards duped of his inheritance, and of several Englishmen and their wives. The manners of these people were rather free and easy—but then the prince set the example. I well remember that he recommended me to make love to one of these *Anglaises* who, he said, would be delighted to receive my attentions. I thought so myself, but she was not young enough to make me wish to go any farther in the matter. The real *châtelaine* who occupied the post of honour, if one can imagine anything honourable about her, was the baronne de Feuchères, the duc de B——’s mistress; she was exactly like a stout, rather fresh-looking cook and would have disgusted any decent fellow at the end of three days. She did a good deal of good with the prince’s money, hoping, thereby, to make people forgive her for her scandalous position as the duke’s paid mistress at the *château* of Chantilly. She took me to see the almshouses which had been endowed by the great Condé in the latter town and in which she took great interest. I did my best to encourage her in this good work, because good works *are* good works and remain so, no matter who their author may be. . . .”

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her power over her elderly lover was so strong that nothing could withstand it, made him sign a will leaving her the estates of Saint-Leu and Boissy, and authorizing her to enjoy the rents from these two domains during his lifetime. Not content with this magnificent gift she, in the following year, persuaded him to increase this legacy by sums of money amounting to one million francs.

She seized everything she could lay her hands upon. On one occasion the duke having expressed his intention of selling a number of valuable horses, Sophie, ever on the look-out for her little perquisites, teased and coaxed him to give them to her as a proof of his affection for her.

Sophie was not a favourite with the French nation ; she had two faults, two very great failings in the eyes of the people : she was English—and therefore “a foreigner,” and she was haughty in her manner. She was perfectly well aware of this dislike ; but her faith in her own charms was such that she thought that she need only show herself in public and everyone would fall down and worship her. One evening she took it into her head that she should like to go to the theatre ; so she engaged a box at the *Théâtre Français* and appeared there in company with some children and her lady's maid. Sophie, in

## An Unpleasant Reception

her desire to impress the audience, had arrayed her mature charms in a robe of that peculiar colour called *ventre de biche* ; her head was enclosed in a magnificent turban of red tulle. Of course every opera-glass was levelled towards the box when this resplendent vision appeared, and then everyone asked his neighbour who *she* was. When it was known that the stout lady in a scarlet turban was the notorious Mme. de Feuchères, a chorus of hisses rose from the pit. Whereupon she hastened to leave her seat and retreated to the back of the box. Her clumsy movements excited fresh hilarity. The pit, thinking that she had withdrawn because she was ashamed of herself, then began to applaud. At the end of the first piece, Sophie imagined that she had been forgotten and ventured to return to her former place ; but she was again hissed and finally obliged to leave the theatre.

The dislike was mutual. Sophie had never liked or understood the French and she took care to let them know it. One day, while seated at dinner between two members of parliament, she spoke her mind very freely concerning a certain recent event. Her remarks were received in silence. At length one of the duke's guests could stand her interference no longer and ventured to contradict her ; this he did with such effect that

## Sophie Dawes

Sophie, finding that she had met her match, retorted :

“ Do you know, *monsieur*, that you are guilty of very impolite conduct towards *Monseigneur* ? ”

Here the duke for once broke through his rule of silence and plucked up sufficient courage to express his opinion. With a bitter smile he turned to the mistress of the house and said :

“ Do not force me to speak my mind, *madame*, for the gratitude which I owe to England cannot be compared with my love for my own country.”

In the month of August, 1824, Sophie went to spend some weeks at Aix-les-Bains where she seems to have enjoyed herself in her own way, for she writes on August 10th :—

“ While you are hunting, *dearest* (sic), I, too, am hunting kings, queens and princesses : you know that I have a great *weakness* for such personages.”

There was still one person who stood in Sophie's way at Chantilly and made her feel that her sway was not altogether sure. That person was Adèle, comtesse de Rully<sup>1</sup> (or Reuilly as some write it), the duc de Bourbon's illegitimate daughter whom he had had carefully educated.

This Adèle was a truly good creature and was

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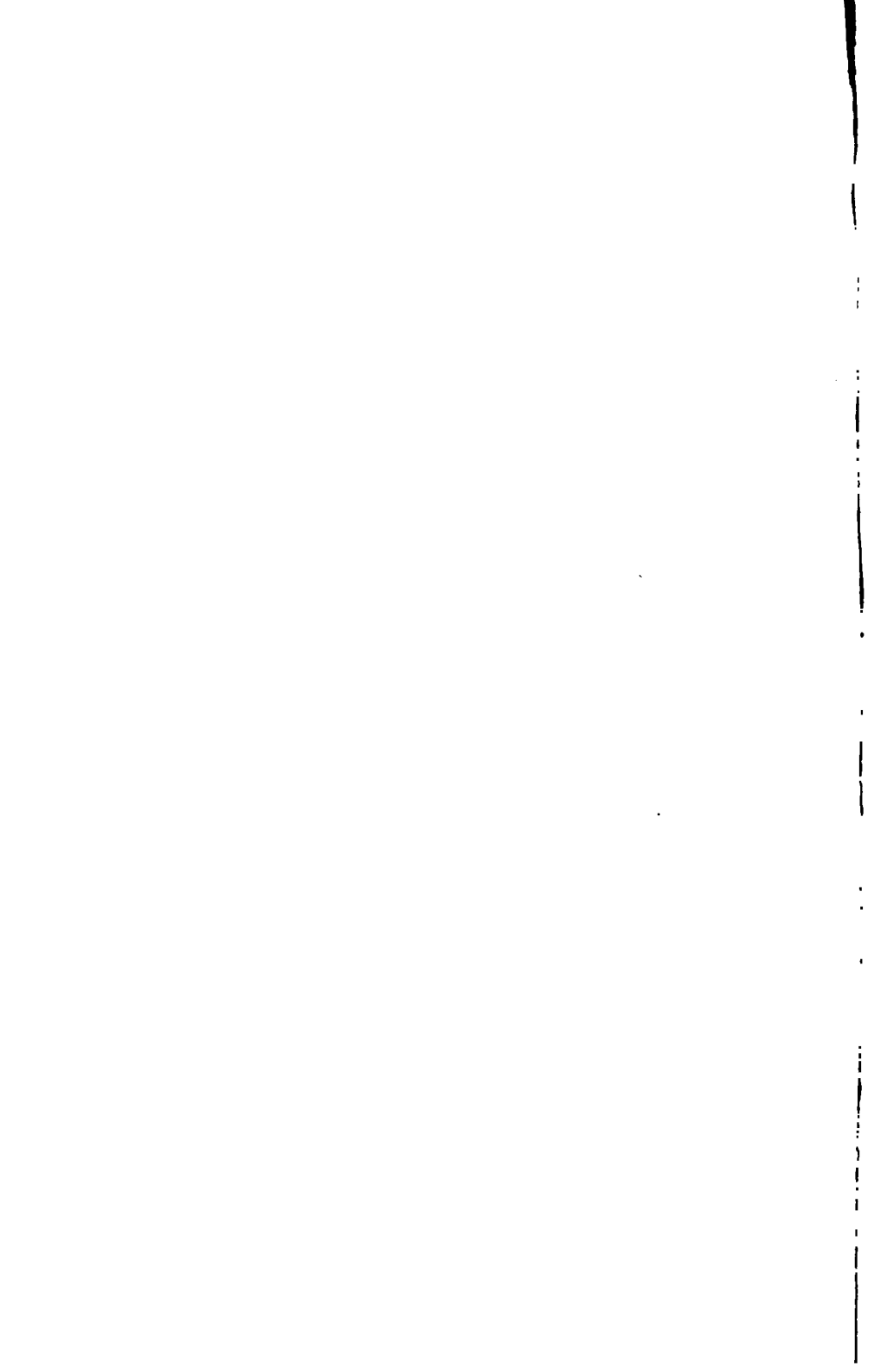
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LOUIS PHILIPPE JOSEPH, DUC D'ORLEANS





## The Duke and His Will

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“ You know my little weakness—how I hate to hear people talk of my death. Don’t mention the subject to me ! ”

Sophie, having broken the ice, again hinted to her old friend that he would do well to make his will and to see about adopting someone worthy of inheriting the great name of Condé. But all her suggestions and hints as to what he had better do were received with utter repugnance ; so repugnant, indeed, was the idea to him that he began to think how he could bribe her to leave him in peace. To obtain silence on the painful subject of possible and probable death, he offered to give her his property in Guise, one of his most valuable possessions, if she would promise to say no more on the matter.

But Sophie was inexorable.

While on a visit to Paris, she wrote the following letter to the duke who had remained at Chantilly to pursue his favourite occupation of hunting :—

“ The King and the royal family wish you to choose a prince from among the members of your

## Sophie Dawes

family that he may inherit your name and your fortune. It is generally believed that I am the only obstacle in the way of such an arrangement. . . . I beg you to put an end to this cruel state of affairs by adopting an heir. By doing this, *my dearest friend* (sic), you will win the good-will of your family and you will assure a less unhappy future to your poor Sophie. . . .”

This letter came as an unpleasant surprise to the old duke. Sophie’s impudent conduct in writing to the duc d’Orléans without first obtaining his consent or consulting his feelings upon such very important matters as adopting an heir and making a will, made him realize how completely he was ruled by her, and how certain she was of her power over him. And then the duc d’Orléans taking all her assertions for granted, irritated and exasperated him.

The above letter showed how she had been talking about him with his wife’s relations ; did he not once say that he hated nothing more than to have himself or his conduct discussed in public ?

Sophie did not let a day pass by without asking him if he had made up his mind to provide for her future. She took care to remind him that time was flying and that he ought to see about the important business. He often said :

“Leave me alone ; I must think before I sign

## A Doubtful Pleasure

such an important document. . . . Let me have breathing time. . . . I am in pain. . . . I am ill."

He consented from time to time to see the duc d'Orléans and to allow the latter to bring his sons to Chantilly. We find a little note from Saint-Leu dated July 22nd of this same year (1827) :—

"Your kind letter, *Monsieur*, arrived just as I was going to mass. I do not lose a moment in order to tell you that I shall be very pleased to see you and my little godson, together with the other princes and anyone you may care to bring, at dinner on Saturday next. I am always very grateful for the marks of affection which you show to me, and I hasten to assure you that I shall ever remain your devoted,

"L. H. J. DE BOURBON."

We need not be surprised at the apparent cordiality of the above missive ; then, as now, gentlemen, on acquainting their best enemies that they would have the pleasure of meeting them at six o'clock in the morning in the Bois de Boulogne on a certain date in order to put a bullet in their vitals, assured the said enemies of their profound consideration and begged them to receive their respectful homage.

## CHAPTER III

Sophie marries her niece to the marquis de Chabannes—Correspondence between the Palais-Royal and the Palais-Bourbon.

**D**URING her visits to the Palais-Royal, Mme. Sophie, always on the watch to catch influential men in her toils, had made the acquaintance of Talleyrand, prince of turncoats. We have already mentioned the fact that Sophie had a niece, or someone whom she called her niece (some historians say she was Sophie's unacknowledged daughter); having placed her nephew on the road to success, she was very anxious to find a suitable husband for this niece who rejoiced in the name of Matilda Dawes. Now Talleyrand had a nephew, the marquis de Chabannes de La Palice, who seems to have rivalled the baron de Feuchères in his lack of observation. Talleyrand soon became on very good terms with Mme. Sophie, and between them they decided to make a match between the young marquis and Miss Matilda Dawes. M. de Talleyrand had not always taken such an interest in his nephew's welfare. The

## Talleyrand's Poor Relations

name of de Chabannes de La Palice is an old and an honoured one in France, however Frédéric de Chabannes, the young man's father, seems to have been rather a ne'er-do-weel with a large family and a small purse owing to his expensive tastes. For many years Talleyrand, the successful man of the world, refused to have anything to do with these poor relations, but when M. de Choulot, the duc de Bourbon's *capitaine des chasses*, married Mlle. Elisabeth de Chabannes, M. de Talleyrand suddenly remembered that he had heard the name somewhere or other, nay, he was even related to the family and would be glad to become better acquainted with his relatives. Mme. de Choulot's brother naturally came to visit her at Chantilly and in Paris where he made such a favourable impression upon his powerful uncle, that the latter said : " If the marquis de Chabannes de La Palice wishes to marry, my brother will give him a dowry and get him a post in the Royal Guard."

It was Mme. de Choulot who asked Miss Matilda in marriage for her brother, and thereby did M. de Talleyrand a very good turn. That gentleman, like Mme. de Feuchères, had a great weakness for royalties. The duc de Bourbon had hitherto refused to invite him to eat at his table ; but on the occasion of the young people's engagement being announced, the duc de Bourbon felt obliged

## Sophie Dawes

to break his rule and invite the hated Talleyrand to dine with him at the Palais-Bourbon, a favour which the time-server had often craved. . . . One good turn deserves another ; and by this amicable arrangement, Miss Matilda gained a husband and M. de Talleyrand a dinner with the duc de Bourbon. But before M. de Chabannes could be "brought to the point," it was necessary to provide Miss Matilda with a dowry. This her aunt promised to find. She then had an interview with the duc de Bourbon to whom she represented that dear Matilda was now of an age to find a husband, but that of course she could not do so unless she had a suitable *dot*, and this she requested the duke to provide for her charming niece. Needless to say, he did so, and Miss Matilda, now the owner of a handsome dowry of one million francs, immediately received an offer of marriage from Mme. la comtesse de Choulot in the name of her brother, the marquis de Chabannes de La Palice.

Mme. de Feuchères now had two very valuable and powerful friends working for her interests ; although the duc d'Orléans, as a member of the French royal family, was extremely necessary to Sophie, Talleyrand with his chameleon-like nature and his talent for turning his coat whenever the cloth seemed inclined to wear out, was more than

## Sophie Dawes

to have the pleasure of showing his purchases to the favourite himself. Having placed the parcel beside her sofa, he proceeded to open it and to unroll a number of bundles of fine English leather suitable for making boots and shoes.

"Now, *madame*," said he with a pompous flourish, "now I shall be always at your feet."

Not only was the duc d'Orléans *aux petits soins* for Mrs. Sophie, but his wife Marie-Amélie, that model of women, and his sister Mme. Adélaïde, were not ashamed to flatter their aged relative's mistress for their own ends. Even the princesse Berthe de Rohan deigned to call upon Mme. la baronne de Feuchères whenever she happened to be staying in the vicinity of Saint-Leu or Chantilly.

During one of Sophie's numerous unofficial visits to the Palais-Royal, the duchesse d'Orléans placed the little duc d'Aumale in his benefactress's lap, saying :

"Deign, *madame*, to embrace your *protégé* !"

Mme. Adélaïde, being a vain woman herself, tried to win Sophie over to her side by flattery. On one occasion she seized the arm of the fair Sophie and exclaimed to M. de Choulot who was walking in the grounds of Neuilly in company with these two ladies :

"But, *mon Dieu* ! how beautiful she is ! Just

## Sophie Dawes

the duc de Bourbon flew into a violent passion and swore that, in consenting to stand godfather to the little duc d'Aumale, he had already done his duty, nay, more than his duty, and that no one had the right to expect or wish him to do anything more.

When Sophie pointed out to him that the d'Orléans family had always expressed the greatest respect and affection for him, he cried in a bitter voice :

“ Ah ! yes ! that is all very well ; but it does not do away with the fact that if, at one time, the duc d'Orléans had had it in his power to do so, he would have made me take the same road which his father made Louis XVI take ! ”

The duc d'Orléans was unable to dupe the duc de Bourbon as to his real feelings for his august relative ; the d'Orléans came of a bad stock and the duke knew it.

Although the unfortunate duchesse de Bourbon had been a princesse d'Orléans, no great intimacy had ever existed between the duc de Bourbon and his wife's family. Perhaps the fact that the duchesse d'Orléans (Louise - Marie - Adélaïde de Bourbon - Penthièvre, the mother of Louis - Philippe) had befriended his wife during the early days of her long widowhood and had been inclined to take her part against her husband, had helped to widen the breach.





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Like many another and more lowly born individual, the duke hated the idea of making his will, of setting his affairs in order before death came to take him away from his worldly possessions. In the course of a conversation with a member of his household, he said :

“ You know my little weakness—how I hate to hear people talk of my death. Don’t mention the subject to me ! ”

Sophie, having broken the ice, again hinted to her old friend that he would do well to make his will and to see about adopting someone worthy of inheriting the great name of Condé. But all her suggestions and hints as to what he had better do were received with utter repugnance ; so repugnant, indeed, was the idea to him that he began to think how he could bribe her to leave him in peace. To obtain silence on the painful subject of possible and probable death, he offered to give her his property in Guise, one of his most valuable possessions, if she would promise to say no more on the matter.

But Sophie was inexorable.

While on a visit to Paris, she wrote the following letter to the duke who had remained at Chantilly to pursue his favourite occupation of hunting :—

“ The King and the royal family wish you to choose a prince from among the members of your

## Sophie Dawes

family that he may inherit your name and your fortune. It is generally believed that I am the only obstacle in the way of such an arrangement. . . . I beg you to put an end to this cruel state of affairs by adopting an heir. By doing this, *my dearest friend* (sic), you will win the good-will of your family and you will assure a less unhappy future to your poor Sophie. . . .”

This letter came as an unpleasant surprise to the old duke. Sophie’s impudent conduct in writing to the duc d’Orléans without first obtaining his consent or consulting his feelings upon such very important matters as adopting an heir and making a will, made him realize how completely he was ruled by her, and how certain she was of her power over him. And then the duc d’Orléans taking all her assertions for granted, irritated and exasperated him.

The above letter showed how she had been talking about him with his wife’s relations ; did he not once say that he hated nothing more than to have himself or his conduct discussed in public ?

Sophie did not let a day pass by without asking him if he had made up his mind to provide for her future. She took care to remind him that time was flying and that he ought to see about the important business. He often said :

“Leave me alone ; I must think before I sign

## A Doubtful Pleasure

such an important document. . . . Let me have breathing time. . . . I am in pain. . . . I am ill."

He consented from time to time to see the duc d'Orléans and to allow the latter to bring his sons to Chantilly. We find a little note from Saint-Leu dated July 22nd of this same year (1827) :—

"Your kind letter, *Monsieur*, arrived just as I was going to mass. I do not lose a moment in order to tell you that I shall be very pleased to see you and my little godson, together with the other princes and anyone you may care to bring, at dinner on Saturday next. I am always very grateful for the marks of affection which you show to me, and I hasten to assure you that I shall ever remain your devoted,

"L. H. J. DE BOURBON."

We need not be surprised at the apparent cordiality of the above missive ; then, as now, gentlemen, on acquainting their best enemies that they would have the pleasure of meeting them at six o'clock in the morning in the Bois de Boulogne on a certain date in order to put a bullet in their vitals, assured the said enemies of their profound consideration and begged them to receive their respectful homage.

## CHAPTER III

Sophie marries her niece to the marquis de Chabannes—Correspondence between the Palais-Royal and the Palais-Bourbon.

**D**URING her visits to the Palais-Royal, Mme. Sophie, always on the watch to catch influential men in her toils, had made the acquaintance of Talleyrand, prince of turncoats. We have already mentioned the fact that Sophie had a niece, or someone whom she called her niece (some historians say she was Sophie's unacknowledged daughter); having placed her nephew on the road to success, she was very anxious to find a suitable husband for this niece who rejoiced in the name of Matilda Dawes. Now Talleyrand had a nephew, the marquis de Chabannes de La Palice, who seems to have rivalled the baron de Feuchères in his lack of observation. Talleyrand soon became on very good terms with Mme. Sophie, and between them they decided to make a match between the young marquis and Miss Matilda Dawes. M. de Talleyrand had not always taken such an interest in his nephew's welfare. The



## Talleyrand's Poor Relations

name of de Chabannes de La Palice is an old and an honoured one in France, however Frédéric de Chabannes, the young man's father, seems to have been rather a ne'er-do-weel with a large family and a small purse owing to his expensive tastes. For many years Talleyrand, the successful man of the world, refused to have anything to do with these poor relations, but when M. de Choulot, the duc de Bourbon's *capitaine des chasses*, married Mlle. Elisabeth de Chabannes, M. de Talleyrand suddenly remembered that he had heard the name somewhere or other, nay, he was even related to the family and would be glad to become better acquainted with his relatives. Mme. de Choulot's brother naturally came to visit her at Chantilly and in Paris where he made such a favourable impression upon his powerful uncle, that the latter said : " If the marquis de Chabannes de La Palice wishes to marry, my brother will give him a dowry and get him a post in the Royal Guard."

It was Mme. de Choulot who asked Miss Matilda in marriage for her brother, and thereby did M. de Talleyrand a very good turn. That gentleman, like Mme. de Feuchères, had a great weakness for royalties. The duc de Bourbon had hitherto refused to invite him to eat at his table ; but on the occasion of the young people's engagement being announced, the duc de Bourbon felt obliged

## Sophie Dawes

to break his rule and invite the hated Talleyrand to dine with him at the Palais-Bourbon, a favour which the time-server had often craved. . . . One good turn deserves another ; and by this amicable arrangement, Miss Matilda gained a husband and M. de Talleyrand a dinner with the duc de Bourbon. But before M. de Chabannes could be "brought to the point," it was necessary to provide Miss Matilda with a dowry. This her aunt promised to find. She then had an interview with the duc de Bourbon to whom she represented that dear Matilda was now of an age to find a husband, but that of course she could not do so unless she had a suitable *dot*, and this she requested the duke to provide for her charming niece. Needless to say, he did so, and Miss Matilda, now the owner of a handsome dowry of one million francs, immediately received an offer of marriage from Mme. la comtesse de Choulot in the name of her brother, the marquis de Chabannes de La Palice.

Mme. de Feuchères now had two very valuable and powerful friends working for her interests ; although the duc d'Orléans, as a member of the French royal family, was extremely necessary to Sophie, Talleyrand with his chameleon-like nature and his talent for turning his coat whenever the cloth seemed inclined to wear out, was more than

## Sophie's Lovers

an ally—he was an accomplice. This Vicar of Bray *à la mode française* had made himself eminently useful to Mme. Sophie by making peace between her and one of her lovers—we need not be surprised to learn that she had three (not counting the painter Ladurner) all of whom occupied different posts in the duke's household and lived under the same roof ; this lover, who was no less a personage than M. de Lambot, the duc de Bourbon's secretary and aide-de-camp after the cruel dismissal of the comte de Rully, has been frequently mentioned in this monograph.

No wonder the virtuous wives and mothers of Chantilly said that Sophie Dawes had brought immorality to their peaceful town.

*A propos* of Sophie's lovers, it was stated that the duc de Bourbon on one occasion was so imprudent as to discover his "dearest friend" engaged in receiving the attentions of a member of his household in the park of Chantilly. Before the duke could open his mouth to express his indignation, Sophie seized her riding-whip and gave him a cut across the face ; she concluded by thrashing him with his own cane !

Notwithstanding his apparent docility, the duc de Bourbon seems to have been gifted with a certain amount of dogged obstinacy, for he still steadily refused to consent to adopt the duc

## Sophie Dawes

d'Aumale, the scion of the hated d'Orléans stock. On August 6th, 1827, Sophie, fearful lest the d'Orléans family should think that she had forgotten her promises to promote their interests, wrote the following letter to the duchesse d'Orléans :—

“ PALAIS-BOURBON.

“ Madame, Will Your Royal Highness deign to permit me to express my gratitude for the graciousness with which you have always received my protestations of devotion and respect—sentiments which I shall ever feel towards your august family. After conversing with the prince de Talleyrand, I take the liberty to assure Your Royal Highness that it is still my fondest wish to see Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon adopt the duc d'Aumale ; but Your Royal Highness will understand that, notwithstanding my great desire to see this project realized, a project by which the name of Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon would be perpetuated and which would be productive of much satisfaction to the whole of France, I can only hope to influence the heart of my benefactor *little by little* upon a subject which always awakens painful memories. However I can assure Your Royal Highness that I will do my very best to obtain a result conformable to your wishes, and to keep alive the affectionate interest which Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon already feels in Monseigneur le duc d'Aumale.

## Business with Pleasure

“ Will Your Royal Highness allow me to take this opportunity to inform you of the approaching marriage of my niece with the marquis de Chabannes ? As his family has the honour to be allied to the house of Bourbon, it would give me the greatest pleasure to be able to present my niece to Your Royal Highness as well as to your august family, and to beg you in person to deign to lend us your aid and bestow your favours upon us. I am, etc, “ BARONNE DE FEUCHÈRES.”

Judging from the above letter, “ business with pleasure ” must have been Mme. Sophie’s favourite motto. The last few lines of her missive are of no especial importance apparently, to anyone who is not in the secret, but they meant failure or success to the schemes of this excellent lady.

We will now read the duchess’s reply, equally clever in its way :—

“ NEUILLY, *August 10th*, 1827.

“ I have received, *Madame*, from the hand of the prince de Talleyrand, your letter dated the 6th inst., and I wish to inform you in my own handwriting how touched I am by the desire which you express so clearly to see my son, the duc d’Aumale, adopted by Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon. I had already been informed of your wish to persuade Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon to take this step ; and so, since you

## Sophie Dawes

have thought it your duty to write to me yourself upon the matter, I in my turn shall think it my duty not to leave you in ignorance of the fact that my mother's heart would be overjoyed to behold my son perpetuate the glorious name of Condé, so justly celebrated in the records of our house and in the history of monarchy in France. Whenever we have heard this scheme of adoption mentioned—which has happened more frequently than we could have wished—we, the duc d'Orléans and myself, have always declared that, if Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon made up his mind to carry it out, and if the King deigned to approve, we should strive in every way to carry out his wishes ; but we thought it our duty to Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon, as well as to ourselves, to act no further and to abstain from taking any step which might look as if we wished to influence him or to hurry him. We felt that, as this adoption would benefit our child in a great measure, we ought to observe respectful silence—as we have done hitherto. The painful memories which you mention to us and which naturally grieve our good uncle, constitute another reason why we should observe silence, although we have sometimes felt tempted to break it in the hopes of being able to assuage his sorrow ; but we thought it best to wait until his kind heart and the affection which he has always shown towards us as well as towards our children, should prompt him to move farther in the matter.

## A Polite Refusal

“ I am very grateful to you, *Madame*, for all you say concerning your desire to bring about this result, which desire, you consider, is shared by Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon. I assure you that I shall never forget you ; and believe me, if ever I have the happiness of seeing my child become his adopted son, you will find in us, on every occasion, for yourself and for your family, that support which you kindly ask me to grant and which my gratitude as a mother shall assure to you.

“ I thank you, *Madame*, for kindly notifying me of the marriage of your niece with M. le marquis de Chabannes. I think that the King and the Princesses will be pleased to receive her as they hold the family into which she is about to marry in high esteem ; but it is my duty to inform you that we cannot break the rules of court etiquette concerning presentations. We can only receive such persons as have already been presented to the King and to the Queen, when there is a queen, or to Madame la Dauphine and to the Princesses who have precedence of us by the law of primogeniture ; neither is it in our power to choose any lady or ladies to make such presentations.

*“ I much regret, Madame, to be obliged to enter into these details, but the request contained at the end of your letter forces me to speak frankly.<sup>1</sup> Believe me, Madame, that although I am obliged to*

<sup>1</sup> This sentence is crossed out in the original rough copy found during the pillage of the Tuileries, February 24th, 1848.

## Sophie Dawes

observe the rules of court etiquette, my feelings for you, which feelings I have just expressed and which I hasten to reiterate, shall never alter. I remain yours very sincerely,

“MARIE-AMÉLIE.”

As we have already seen, Sophie, ever since the baptism of the duc d'Aumale, had visited her *protégés* at the Palais-Royal and at the *château* of Neuilly ; it is true that these visits were unofficial, and that was the very reason why Sophie was so anxious to be received in state, so that her jealous rivals might see that she had been taken back into favour. On receiving the above letter, Sophie hastened to thank the duchess for her extreme amiability ; this time she makes no mention of the coveted favour. She remembers the old French adage : “ *Ce que femme veut, Dieu le veut.* ”

“ SAINT-LEU, August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1827.

“ Madame, the gracious conduct of Your Royal Highness in deigning to reply to my letter has touched me so that I cannot resist the desire to express to you my respectful gratitude.

“ The reserve which Your Royal Highness thinks it your duty to observe concerning Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon leaves me free to discharge a precious duty ; and I can assure Your Royal Highness that it will give me the greatest pleasure to be able to prove my devotion and to





MARIE-AMÉLIE, WIFE OF LOUIS-PHILIPPE



## The Duchesse d'Orléans

grant the prayers of an affectionate parent. By persuading my benefactor to bequeath his name to posterity, I shall feel that I am giving him a proof of my gratitude. I beg Your Royal Highness once more to believe in my respectful devotion.

“ I am, etc.,

“ BARONNE DE FEUCHÈRES.”

It is always difficult to make excuses for dishonourable conduct in royal personages ; they have everything in their favour—education, careful bringing up, good examples ; but we are forced to wish that Marie-Amélie had shown a little more independence of character. And yet her docility was perhaps one of her best qualities. Perhaps the only time in her life when she showed any spirit was when her father, Ferdinando, king of the Two Sicilies, refused to allow her to marry the duc d'Orléans, on which occasion she threatened to become a nun. Her blind obedience to, and her boundless confidence in her husband never failed her. No doubt it was best so—for her own sake and for the sake of those whom she loved. We need a good deal of philosophy and a great deal of affection, almost the affection of a mother for its wayward child, when the veil of romance has faded away and we find that the idol has feet of clay.

## Sophie Dawes

Although Louis XVIII included Adélaïde d'Orléans in his dislike and mistrust of the hated d'Orléans stock, such was not the case with Marie-Amélie, of whom he said in his memoirs<sup>1</sup> :—

“ I had heard a great deal in favour of this Princess, but when I became personally acquainted with her, I found in her many more good qualities than I had been led to expect. Such a wife in some degree quieted my apprehensions as to the duc d'Orléans.”

Marie-Amélie's pleasant expression made up for her lack of beauty ; indeed, if we look at the portraits of Louis-Philippe, Marie-Amélie, and Mme. Adélaïde, we are constrained to confess that they make a remarkably plain trio. In her youth Marie-Amélie was tall, slender, and graceful, with blue eyes and the bad teeth which so spoiled the empress Josephine's appearance. She carried herself very well and had a certain air of distinction about her. Did not Talleyrand say of her that “ she was the greatest great lady in Europe ” ?

Mme. de Boigne said of her : “ I cannot over-estimate the veneration and tender devotion I feel for the duchesse d'Orléans. She was adored by all about her. The more often anyone came in contact with her, the deeper was the veneration

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Marie-Amélie*, by C. C. Dyson.

## The Duchesse d'Orléans

and respect she inspired. Her sympathetic tact in no way modified the loftiness of her sentiments and the strength of her character. She treated everybody with the kindness natural to her, but her attitude was marked by such delicate shades of consideration that each individual could learn his position in her society. She had persuaded herself that she had no head for business (although her opinions enjoyed deep respect in the family councils) ; she thought her sister-in-law, Adélaïde, had much greater capacity for dealing with affairs and yielded to her in questions of politics. Her sisters-in-law were different and belonged to such widely separated schools of thought, that they would not have been naturally congenial to each other had they not been united by their common devotion to the duc d'Orléans. Mme. Adélaïde lived only for her brother, and never was there an affection more passionate than that of Marie-Amélie for her husband. In full dress, her appearance was admirable ; she was very gracious, but extremely dignified. In her eyes there was an expression that seemed to emanate from a pure and noble soul, and I am convinced that the duchesse d'Orléans owed much of the fascination that she exercised over the most hostile people to the influence of that glance."

Mr. C. C. Dyson, in his life of Marie-Amélie, says :

## Sophie Dawes

"She was looked upon as the guardian angel of the d'Orléans family. If she happened to be ill, despair reigned at the Palais-Royal. The husband, the children, the friends, the servants would not stir and hardly dared look at each other. The duc d'Orléans, usually the most self-controlled of men, completely lost his head and could not hide his grief even at her bedside. Afterwards, when she had recovered, Marie-Amélie said : ' thank God for having allowed me to see how much my husband loves me.' "

And of her he used to say : " There are no more Amélies ! "

How different was her character to that of another Marie—Marie-Louise, her niece and the unworthy successor to Josephine who, according to M. Joseph Turquan and M. Horace de Viel-Castel, was by no means an ideal companion to Napoleon, nearly all of whose women-folk brought dishonour upon him.

The marriage between Miss Matilda Dawes and the marquis de Chabannes was now celebrated with great splendour at the Palais-Bourbon where the bride was given a magnificent apartment. Matilda's father, who was then residing in the Isle of Wight and did not wish to come to France to attend his daughter's marriage, on May 31st, 1827, signed a document authorizing his sister

## The Dauphine and Sophie

Sophie and his son, James Dawes, to act for him in the matter. For some reason best known to himself, the marquis de Chabannes did not appreciate the fact that he was now expected to inhabit an apartment in the Palais-Bourbon ; he left it soon after his marriage when the magnificent suite of rooms, which had been assigned to the young couple, was given to the baron de Flassans.

When once the marquis de Chabannes had married Sophie's niece, that lady and her aunt lost no time in trying to persuade him to write a petition to Charles X begging him to allow the young *marquise* and Mme. de Feuchères to attend court.<sup>1</sup> This, after some demur, he consented to write. But Sophie was not to obtain her heart's desire for many a long day. The Dauphine was a serious obstacle to this presentation ; she had heard quite enough of the Feuchères, late Dawes, establishment to wish to hear no more ; she cited her reasons and concluded with a sentence which was far from complimentary to the male and female worshippers at the throne of Charles X. " After all," said she, " she will only be one more *canaille* : we already receive so many of her sort,

<sup>1</sup> I think it my duty to say that, since writing the above, I have received a communication from the head of the de Chabannes de La Palice family to the effect that Matilda Dawes, after her marriage, ceased all intercourse with her aunt.

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that one or two more or less will not make much difference."

Mme. Sophie, checkmated for the second time, and thinking that another family meeting would clench the matter concerning the adoption of the little duc d'Aumale by the duc de Bourbon, gave a breakfast-party about this time to which she invited her lover and the comte and comtesse de Lavillegontier<sup>1</sup>; the latter lady, who secretly hoped to get a good slice of the ducal cake for herself, was at that time one of the baronne de Feuchères' warmest allies. It was arranged that Mme. de Lavillegontier, during the course of the repast, was to throw out hints that the duc de Bourbon would give universal satisfaction by making a will in favour of the little duc d'Aumale. She was also directed to say that the duke's godson would be a most suitable person to perpetuate the name of Condé, so justly renowned in history.

But at the first mention of the name of Condé, that glorious name for which the erstwhile worthy, but now alas! unworthy descendant of the great conqueror professed an almost religious respect, the old gentleman bounded off his chair gesticulating and beside himself with fury and indignation.

<sup>1</sup> The name of de Lavillegontier is spelled in various ways by Sophie Dawes' biographers.



## The Proposed Adoption Refused

“ Never ! never ! ” cried he, “ that shall never be ! The name of Condé shall never be borne by a member of the d’Orléans family ! ”

He would say no more that day ; it was only by dint of condoling and sympathizing with him that the hostess and guests were able to calm him down and get him to promise that he would consider the matter.

Throughout this painful story and the tragic incidents which marked its close, it is safe to say that the duc de Bourbon was never for one minute duped as to the real reason of the extraordinary interest displayed by the d’Orléans family in their aged relative, the disposal of his huge fortune and the choice of an heir to the glorious name of Condé. As he deserved, M. de Lambot, the duke’s aide-de-camp, only received blame for his share in the transaction ; his conduct, in fact, estranged him from his royal master.

The duc d’Orléans now saw that Sophie had not forgotten him ; he realized that the adoption was only a question of time ; he showered favours and attentions upon the would-be authoress of his future good fortune. On his return from a visit to England, the duke appeared in the baroness’s apartment at the Palais-Bourbon bearing a voluminous parcel ; he refused to allow the footman to relieve him of his burden, for he wished

## Sophie Dawes

to have the pleasure of showing his purchases to the favourite himself. Having placed the parcel beside her sofa, he proceeded to open it and to unroll a number of bundles of fine English leather suitable for making boots and shoes.

"Now, *madame*," said he with a pompous flourish, "now I shall be always at your feet."

Not only was the duc d'Orléans *aux petits soins* for Mrs. Sophie, but his wife Marie-Amélie, that model of women, and his sister Mme. Adélaïde, were not ashamed to flatter their aged relative's mistress for their own ends. Even the princesse Berthe de Rohan deigned to call upon Mme. la baronne de Feuchères whenever she happened to be staying in the vicinity of Saint-Leu or Chantilly.

During one of Sophie's numerous unofficial visits to the Palais-Royal, the duchesse d'Orléans placed the little duc d'Aumale in his benefactress's lap, saying :

"Deign, *madame*, to embrace your *protégé* !"

Mme. Adélaïde, being a vain woman herself, tried to win Sophie over to her side by flattery. On one occasion she seized the arm of the fair Sophie and exclaimed to M. de Choulot who was walking in the grounds of Neuilly in company with these two ladies :

"But, *mon Dieu* ! how beautiful she is ! Just

## Mme. Adélaïde's Private Life

look, *monsieur* ; is it possible to be prettier than she is ? ”

And that was not all ; she was invited to take part in operettas and charades and to be present at several small functions. They flattered her in every way and delighted to call her the duc d'Orléans' “ guardian angel.”

It is no exaggeration to assert that without Mme. Adélaïde, Louis-Philippe would never have become king of the French. Mme. Adélaïde, who had even more nicknames than her little nephew's benefactress, for she was known to Jacques Bonhomme as *Mme. Messalin*, *Mme. Atthalin* and *Athalie de Bourbon*, was not a beauty if we believe M. Raoul Arnaud ; her complexion was swarthy and red ; indeed her whole appearance was that of a person addicted to strong drink. Her private life was responsible for the coarse epigrams which neither imprisonment nor fines could check ; these epigrams probably contained equal shares of nonsense and of truth. It is an open secret in France that a certain venerable *académicien*, who is still living, is the son of Mme. Adélaïde and that he was not that lady's only child. Respect for old age prevents me revealing his name. Camille Pelletan, but lately Minister of the Marine in France, once said : “ It is not everyone who has the good fortune to be born an orphan.”

## Sophie Dawes

The seemingly unjust sentence that the sons of men shall suffer for the sins of their fathers still holds good even in the twentieth century.

One of the individuals who managed to captivate the strong-minded Mme. Adélaïde's fickle affections (whom Napoleon must surely have forgotten when he said that the duchesse d'Angoulême was the only *man* of her family) rejoiced in the name of Atthalin, hence the nickname *Mme. Atthalin* ; he was a baron and a general in the French army. But as he married a certain Mlle. Lelandais, on December 19th, 1836, we may infer that he did not come up to Mme. Adélaïde's standard of manly perfection. The baron, who was fifty-two years of age at the time of this marriage, had been a very good artist in his youth ; so much talent had he displayed, that one of his pictures obtained a medal at the *Salon* of 1819.

Mme. Adélaïde shared her brother's fondness for money and exercised the same cheese-paring economy ; this latter little peculiarity was excused by her friends on the grounds that she had lived through so many vicissitudes of fortune that she was obliged to put something by for a rainy day—that rainy day which is sure to come sooner or later to those who are unprepared. As she lived with her brother and sister-in-law, her ex-



MADAME ADÉLAÏDE, SISTER OF LOUIS-PHILIPPE



## Preparing for a Rainy Day

penses were limited to the salaries of her own ladies-in-waiting who numbered twelve, her twelve or thirteen horses and her wardrobe which was of the plainest. A new dress was a rare event ; its first appearance in public caused quite a sensation ; much fortitude was required to part with any of her old garments. She gave to numerous and various charities ; but it is rather a shock to our feelings of admiration to learn that she invariably demanded an autograph receipt from all those whom she succoured in any way : these also would serve for the rainy day, perhaps.

Probably her affection for her numerous nephews and nieces was her best quality, a quality which is universal in France where King Baby reigns supreme. The little nephews each had a pet-name : the duc de Nemours was called *Tan* or *Memours* ; the duc de Montpensier, of whom there exists an adorable portrait in the Naples Museum—a comical little creature, with round, astonished eyes and chubby cheeks, clad in voluminous white pantaloons and holding a hoop in one hand and a doll in the other—was *Toto* or *Totone* ; the prince de Joinville was *Hadji* or *Chagnard*, and the duc de Chartres *le Biau*.

It is a serious question whether the custom which now prevails in wealthy French families of engaging foreign nurses and governesses to look

## Sophie Dawes

after the beloved Loulou or Coco is productive of good results. Loulou learns a little Cockney English from his half-educated nursery-governess ; while Coco, with many protests, learns sufficient German to understand his Fräulein's ceaseless scoldings. Loulou and Coco are quite elderly personages, and are no longer taught to revere their grandparents as in the days of Victor Hugo, whose love for little children was one of his many noble qualities ; his book of poems, *l'Art d'être Grand-père* has placed him among the immortals. Here is the ideal child :

Il est si beau, l'enfant, avec son doux sourire,  
Sa douce bonne foi, sa voix qui veut tout dire,  
Ses pleurs vite apaisés,  
Laissant errer sa vue étonnée et ravie,  
Offrant de toutes parts sa jeune âme à la vie,  
Et sa bouche aux baisers !<sup>1</sup>

While in exile at Hauteville House in the island of Guernsey, whither he had been forced to flee with Georges and Jeanne and their parents, and where he preferred to remain rather than sacrifice any of his political ideals, he wrote :

Tant que Jeanne sera mon guide sur la terre,  
Tant que Dieu permettra que j'aie, o pûr mystère !  
En mon âpre chemin  
Ces deux bonheurs où tient tout l'idéal possible,  
Dans l'âme un astre immense, et dans ma main paisible  
Une petite main.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Les Feuilles d'automne : Où donc est le bonheur ?*

<sup>2</sup> *L'Art d'être Grand-père : Laus puero.*



## Sophie Matures Her Plans

Mme. Adélaïde was not the only child-lover for, rightly or wrongly, the "guardian angel" was said to be equally devoted to the little d'Orléans. Sophie, meanwhile, was maturing her plans which consisted of persuading the old duke to leave her more property. The last of the Condés was now seventy-one years of age and a very old man for his years ; it was more than time for him to make a will, if he was ever going to do so. And then it was his duty to provide for the faithful companion who had ruled him with a rod of iron for the last sixteen years. And Sophie intended to see that a will, duly signed, sealed and witnessed should be ready on the day of reckoning. After all, it was very natural that the idea of adopting a d'Orléans should be repugnant to him ; and then the thought that he must die soon revived all the cruel memories of the past and reminded him of the death of his beloved son who would have been so worthy to continue the Condé traditions. Perhaps—nay, we can say with certitude—the duke realized that when once Sophie had got her wish, she would abandon him or do worse. Did he not say while talking to de Surval, one of his most honest servitors :

" My life will not be worth much when once they have got what they want " ?

More than one of his well-wishers urged him to

## Sophie Dawes

free himself from the tyrant before it was too late. M. Hostein, his dentist, was pointing out to him that it would be an easy matter if he would only show a little determination, when the duke stopped him with a gesture of despair, saying :

“ Do you think it so easy to do that ? It is easy enough when one is young, but when one has reached the age of seventy-one, it is well nigh impossible to break the chain of habit. I have tried several times and each time I have failed. Have you never watched a gnat hovering round a spider’s web ? If its wing only grazes the web, it is caught and the greedy spider casts its net over its victim and makes it a prisoner. . . . Well, that is just what has happened to me.”

It was during the autumn of 1827 that a strange conversation took place between Sophie and the illustrious baron de Flassans ; the person who happened to overhear this conversation did not pay much heed to it at the time, but it played a considerable rôle in the legal proceedings which followed the duke’s sudden demise.

In the month of November of this same year, a gamekeeper in the prince’s employ named Bonardel was making his usual tour of inspection in the park of Chantilly in order to see if any game had been caught in his traps. The duke had

## Significant Words

given a fête that day in honour of a new pheasantry which he had lately had erected in the park.

The gamekeeper was standing in this pheasantry between the wall and a hedge when he heard footsteps in the enclosure. As autumn was late that year, he was completely hidden from sight by the foliage. On peeping out to see who was walking in the pheasantry, he espied Mme. de Feuchères who was almost immediately joined by James Dawes. After talking about the pheasants for a few minutes, Mr. James asked his aunt if *Monseigneur* was likely to make his will soon, to which Mrs. Sophie replied that "he would not be long now."

Whereupon Mr. James exclaimed: "Oh! he'll take a long time to die!"

Mme. de Feuchères retorted: "Bah! he can hardly hold himself together. I have only to give him a push with my little finger and he tumbles down immediately. It would take very little to suffocate him!"—significant words, big with threats for the future.

On the subject of their conversation appearing at the entrance of the pheasantry, James Dawes started and said:

"Ah! there is *Monseigneur*!" and the gamekeeper heard no more.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> During the lawsuit between the princes de Rohan and Mme. de Feuchères, the latter contradicted the witness Bonardel

## Sophie Dawes

The unfortunate duke, ever since Sophie had begun to scheme and plot in the interests of the d'Orléans family—and in her own—had been exposed to all sorts of petty annoyances. He complained that he could not sleep, and that his blood was heated in consequence. Quarrels between him and his tyrant were frequent; the walls of the lovely *châteaux* of Chantilly and Saint-Leu re-echoed with angry cries.

The duke became morose; he lost his pleasure in hunting, his favourite occupation since his childhood. Sophie had even made him reduce the number of his hunters that she might have more money to put in her own pocket. He himself was perfectly well aware that she wanted him out of the way.

In the beginning of the year 1828, Mme. de Feuchères urged the duke to leave Chantilly and to go up to Paris which she probably found a more amusing place than Saint-Leu and Chantilly with the everlasting shooting and hunting parties to which the duke now occasionally consented to invite the duc d'Orléans. Mme. de Feuchères

and said that, as she and her nephew always talked English together, the gamekeeper could not possibly have understood what they were talking about. M. Bonardel swore on his honour that he had heard the above conversation, adding that he had been in the duke's employ for over forty years and that he bore Mme. de Feuchères no spite.

## A Hypocritical Letter

was quite as determined to leave the country as her lover was determined that nothing should induce him to move up to Paris. During one of these altercations as to which should give in to which, Mme. Sophie rushed out of the room and slammed the door in the prince's face.

"She wants to go," said he, "so I shall have to give in to her."

In April, 1828, while Mme. de Feuchères was up in Paris, the comtesse de Quesnay died very suddenly at Chantilly. That Sophie still thought it necessary to feign concern for the duke's health is proved by the letter which she wrote to him on learning of this lady's sudden demise :

"I was so frightened for a moment," she writes, "when I saw James arrive from Chantilly, *my dearest* (sic). But he soon reassured me by informing me that you were in good health, which gave me great pleasure. I thank you, *dearest* (sic), for your kind letter of the day before yesterday. I have got a piece of news for you : I have been apprised that I am to have a visit from royalty to-day at half-past twelve o'clock. I am expecting Monseigneur le duc d'Orléans ; we shall talk of you, *dearest* (sic) and I will tell you all about it to-morrow."

James Dawes seems to have been always with the duke when Sophie was away attending to "business" in Paris.

## Sophie Dawes

The duke one day, in a fit of despair caused by another terrible scene, cried to M. de Surval :

“ They want me to die ! they are longing to get rid of me ! ”

Although the above-named M. de Surval was originally a *protégé* of Mme. Sophie, he seems to have been an honest fellow—did not even the duc d’Orléans say of him that he was an “ honest man ” ?—and to have tried to do his duty towards his unhappy master. He lived to regret the day when he entered the baronne de Feuchères’ service. The latter, in engaging M. de Surval, showed another proof of her cleverness, for she dared not dismiss all the duke’s faithful servitors (she allowed him to keep Manoury) and she wished to keep on good terms with public opinion—that is to say, to leave as few loopholes for slander to creep through as possible—and she secretly hoped that she would be able to bribe M. de Surval to keep his eyes shut when the time came for him to do so. A peculiar conversation took place when she sent her nephew to inform M. de Surval that he had been chosen to occupy the post of secretary to the last of the Condés.

“ Yes,” said the illustrious representative of the house of Dawes ; “ yes, there’s no doubt about it—you’re a lucky fellow. You are going to get

## A Newspaper Report

this appointment—but of course you will do everything my aunt wishes you to do ! ”

Although M. de Surval does not appear to have been gifted with an over-abundant share of sagacity, he seems at last to have fathomed Sophie's designs and to have done his best for his old master for whom it is impossible not to feel a certain amount of pity. Death had taken his only son from him ; his own mean conduct in obeying Sophie's injunctions had driven his daughter from his presence. He was now completely at the mercy of Sophie and her minions.

In November, 1828, a newspaper, the *Aristarque*, a veritable rag from the Grub Street Press, published the following piece of news :

“ We learn from one of our *confrères* that his Royal Highness the duc de Bourbon has made a will naming M. le duc de Nemours, the second son of the duc d'Orléans, as his heir on condition that he takes the title of prince de Condé. . . . ”

This announcement was either a very clever shot in the dark or else an uncommonly neat piece of manœuvring. Did it emanate from the fertile brain of Sophie Dawes ?—probably. . . . The duc d'Orléans, on reading this announce-

## Sophie Dawes

ment, immediately caused his secretary, M. de Broval, to write a letter to M. de Gatigny, the duc de Bourbon's steward :

‘ Monseigneur le duc d’Orléans has just read in several of this morning’s papers an article in which it is said that Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon has made a will in which he names Monseigneur le duc de Nemours as his heir on condition that he takes the title of Condé. I have already had the honour to meet you, *monsieur*, on a previous occasion when you were kind enough to promise to assure Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon that their Royal Highnesses and those persons attached to their service were totally ignorant of any such scheme and had nothing whatever to do with the publication of these articles in the daily papers. Their Royal Highnesses beg you once more to believe my assertions; they are well aware of the great advantages which would accrue to their child and to his posterity should such be the case, and that it would be a great honour should a prince, the scion of our kings, be chosen to inherit the name of Condé, so dear to France and so renowned in history. But their Royal Highnesses’ feelings towards the venerable relative to whom they are so tenderly and truly attached cause them to regret extremely that such articles should have been published in the newspapers. This, *monsieur*, is what I have been commissioned to inform you, and I conclude



## The Duke's Fortune

in begging you to show this letter to his Royal Highness, Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon."

A popular saying all the world over is : " No smoke without fire."

Naturally the duke's household began to think that their master really meant to leave all his fortune—that is to say, that portion which Sophie was willing to relinquish as a sop to Cerberus—to one of the sons of the duc d'Orléans.

Once when the duke was strolling in the park of Chantilly with one of his officers, the latter remarked :

" So *Monseigneur* has at last made up his mind to whom he is going to leave Chantilly ? "

Whereupon the duke replied :

" No ; they have tried to influence me in the matter, but you are well aware as to my wishes upon this subject. You know to whom I shall leave it."

He had hitherto said that Chantilly was to go to the duc de Bordeaux, while Saint-Leu was to belong to the faithful companion of many years.

The duc d'Orléans' visits to Chantilly now became more frequent. In the Diary of Cuvillier-Fleury we read on January 11th, 1829 :

" The Prince (the duc d'Orléans) took his four sons to-day to Chantilly to visit the prince de

## Sophie Dawes

Condé who hunted notwithstanding the fact that there were seven degrees of frost and that he ran the risk of breaking his neck."

During one of her numerous visits to the gay capital, Sophie wrote :

May 1st, 1829.

"For a long time, *my dearest friend* (sic), my mind has been occupied by a very important matter ; until this day I have been unable to summon sufficient courage to speak openly to you for fear of causing you pain. . . . The time has come, however, and I am now forced to fulfil a sacred duty towards you. My enemies continue to declare that I wish to profit by the tender affection which you bear for me in order to obtain possession of your fortune. Strong in the knowledge that my intentions are absolutely guiltless of any such crime, I have until to-day neglected to take the necessary steps to clear myself in the eyes of the royal family who, I cannot doubt, will do justice to me when they know what I have done. When I saw you lately at Chantilly so unwell, *my dearest friend* (sic), the most cruel reflections seized me ; and indeed, should this illness become more serious, what would my position be ? I, who in such an hour should have cause to hope that I might be allowed to care for you tenderly—I should be the first to be driven away from you, and that because certain evil-intentioned parties suppose me to have designs upon your fortune.

## A Sacred Duty

“Forgive me, *my dearest friend* (sic), if I am obliged to enter into these details which are indeed too painful ; but I have already told you that I consider it a sacred duty to go down upon my knees at your feet, if necessary, in order to persuade you to fulfil the duty which is incumbent upon every man, no matter how lowly his position in life may be, and especially upon a Prince who bears such an illustrious name as yours. The King and the royal family desire you to choose a prince belonging to your own family that he may inherit your name and your fortune some day. They think that I am the only person who stands in the way of such a choice.

“After turning the matter well over in my mind, I have come to the conclusion that the duc d’Aumale is most worthy to enjoy this great favour ; this young prince is your godchild and is doubly attached to you by the ties of blood. Although still so young, he already promises to be worthy to bear your name. Do not fear, I beg you, that this adoption will cause you any trouble. You need alter none of your usual habits ; you need only sign a document and then you will feel reassured as to the future and they will let me stay with you and not try to find an excuse to send me away. If, notwithstanding all I have just said, your wounded heart prevents you making this adoption, I shall feel obliged to say that the affection and disinterestedness which I have always shown towards you ought to make

## Sophie Dawes

you do this thing, were it only to please me ; by this act, you will win, *my dearest friend* (sic), not only the goodwill of the royal family, but you will brighten your poor Sophie's future."

Poor Sophie ! she was indeed worthy of pity. Ever since the month of April, 1824, she had enjoyed the revenue of Saint-Leu, a mere *bagatelle* amounting to 20,000 francs (£800) per annum. During the spring of this same year (1829) she, after a good deal of gentle persuasion, had managed to get the duke to give her one of his most treasured possessions, the forest of Enghien, which was worth 100,000 francs (£4000) a year. And yet this was the woman who maintained that : "*L'argent n'est rien, l'honneur est tout.*"

Sophie's intervention only enraged the duke ; his frequent fits of passion probably helped to complete the ruin of his health which, as we have already seen, had been failing since 1827. On Sophie's return that same day to Chantilly the duke, during another passionate outburst, informed her that he had no intention of adopting either the duc d'Aumale or the duc de Bordeaux, that nothing on earth should ever make him sign a will in favour of the former and that he wished to hear no more about either prince.

Sophie, nothing daunted, returned to attend to

## A Veiled Threat

her "business" in Paris and, on the following day, wrote another edition of the same old story :

"PALAIS-BOURBON, *May 2nd*, 1829.

"I have just received the enclosed letter from the duc d'Orléans, *my dearest friend* (sic); I send it to you in fear and trembling. And yet you really have no cause to be angry with me. I assure you that I should be in despair if I thought that my efforts were likely to be unsuccessful. Remember, *dearest* (sic), that you are doing this for your Sophie who has always loved you dearly. . . . You reproached me so cruelly for having written to the duc d'Orléans, that I consider it my duty to inform you that Monseigneur le duc d'Orléans is coming here this morning in order to see you before he starts for England. I beg you, do not refuse to come and breakfast with me as usual. This visit will be less embarrassing to you and you will not be obliged to send a written reply or to say anything definite. . . . It will look bad if you do not come. If you prefer me not to assist at the interview, Monseigneur le duc d'Orléans can come to you."

The sentence : "It will look bad if you do not come" almost amounts to a threat.

Here is the letter from the duc d'Orléans <sup>1</sup> :

<sup>1</sup> Louis-Philippe was but a poor hand at spelling ; we notice frequent blunders such as : *avès*, *prouvés*, *veuillès*, *pourriès*, *étiès*, *croyés*, etc.

## Sophie Dawes

“ NEUILLY, *May 2nd*, 1829.

“ *Monsieur*, I cannot resist the desire to express to you in my own handwriting how touched I am at Mme. de Feuchères' honourable conduct in speaking to you, as she kindly tells me she has done. It is not for me, in such a circumstance when it rests with you to procure great advantages to one of my children, to presume to ask what you propose to do before it pleases you to tell me of your own accord ; but I think it my duty, and I owe it to the same blood which flows in our veins to tell you how happy I should be to behold the ties which already unite us in so many ways strengthened by new ties, and how proud I should be if one of my children were destined to bear a name which is precious to every member of our family and to which so many glorious memories are attached.”

These letters caused a new explosion of anger on the duc de Bourbon's part ; it was of short duration, however, for he went up to Paris in obedience to Sophie's wishes, breakfasted with the duc d'Orléans and, although he would say nothing definite, made a very favourable impression upon his hostess and his fellow-guest. So favourable was the impression, in fact, that the duc d'Orléans, before starting for London, commissioned M. Dupin, his man of business, to prepare a will in favour of the duc d'Aumale

## A Will prepared for the Duke

which will he intended, with the help of Mme. de Feuchères, to persuade the last of the Condés to sign. When the document was ready, M. Dupin sent it, together with the following letter, to his royal master :

“ *Monseigneur*, here is the document which Your Royal Highness, before your departure to London, charged me to draw up. In order to keep the matter a secret, as Your Royal Highness recommended me to do, I am sending you the second copy which I wrote with my own hand, as I did not wish to intrust the task to a stranger. The same desire to be perfectly discreet prevented me asking the opinion of other jurisconsults, as I should like to have done ; but Your Royal Highness will still be able to consult other lawyers whenever you wish and should think it best to do so.

“ I have done my very best, forced as I was to rely upon my own resources ; I have endeavoured to follow the wishes of his Royal Highness Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon, and I have tried to word the document in such a manner so that no third party (who in such cases is always anxious to go to law) can find anything to lay hold of and thus invalidate the will. I have added a declaration of adoption<sup>1</sup> which I consider in-

<sup>1</sup> It was this document which was found after the duc de Bourbon's death in the casket given by Mme. de Feuchères to the duke's godson, Obry (see page 223).

## Sophie Dawes

dispensable to the validity of the first document.

“ I have the honour, etc.,

“ DUPIN, *athé.*”

It must have been a pleasant surprise to the unfortunate goose with the golden eggs—if I may be allowed to use such an expression in connection with a royal personage—to discover that he was expected to sign a will which he knew nothing about, before he had even had time to think in whose favour he should make it. And now here was the will ready drawn up ; it only needed the shaking signature of an old man bowed down with age and troubles not altogether undeserved to make it legal.

When Mme. de Feuchères, in June, 1829, gave the duke the rough draft of the will to read, he took it away without saying a word and carried it into his private apartment to read it in peace. He was overwhelmed. On M. de Surval happening to enter the room, he called him to his side and, showing him the document, said :

“ Just look what they want me to do.”

Mme. de Feuchères, in a letter to the duc d'Orléans, acquaints us of the result of her clever



## Sophie's Stratagem

stratagem which however was not so successful as she had expected.

“ *July 2nd, 1829.*

“ *Monseigneur*, it was only last Monday that I was able to find a favourable opportunity in which to mention the scheme of adoption to our friend ; the document has been in his possession since that day, but he has not uttered one single word to me upon the subject. As he does not seem anxious to decide the matter in a hurry, I think it would be a good thing if Your Highness and the duc d'Aumale were to honour us with a visit. Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon, during a long conversation with me, repeated several times that he should always be extremely pleased to see you.

“ I beg Your Royal Highness to believe in the devotion and veneration of her who signs herself,

“ *BARONNE DE FEUCHÈRES.*”

We have reason to believe that the duc de Bourbon's desire to see the duc d'Orléans and his sons was not so keen as Mme. Sophie would have us imagine.

On receiving this letter, the duc d'Orléans, who was never slow to take a hint, wrote off to the duc de Bourbon thanking him for showing such interest in his dear child and assuring him that he had been deeply touched on hearing from Mme. de Feuchères that her friend really meant

## Sophie Dawes

to adopt his son ! He again repeated how proud he should be if one of his children were to inherit the glorious name of Condé. He took care to prevent a refusal by thanking the old gentleman in anticipation.

## CHAPTER IV

Sophie shows signs of nervousness—First scenes of violence—  
The duc de Bourbon begs for mercy—His friends try to  
rescue him.

**I**T was now seven years since Mme. la baronne de Feuchères had conceived her twofold plan of getting readmitted to court and of obtaining possession of the duc de Bourbon's huge fortune, or as much of it as she could get without running any risk of incurring a lawsuit with disappointed heirs.

Louis XVIII had disappeared from life's stage ; death had at last put an end to his terrible sufferings of which the vicomte de Reiset, in his work upon Marie-Caroline, duchesse de Berry, gives us such a painful account.

Charles X was busy pursuing that foolhardy line of conduct which was soon to lead him to exile and death in far-away Goritz.

Seven years had elapsed ; seven years is a long time to wait. Even Sophie, whose patience rivalled that of Griselda, must have found it anything but a pleasant task to have to wait

## Sophie Dawes

until these tantalizing royal personages would consent to make up their mind and to act as she wished them to act.

Seven years had passed and still she seemed as far as ever from the goal of her desire. Charles X obstinately refused to receive her at court ; and although she visited the d'Orléans family both in Paris and Neuilly, her visits were unofficial and therefore she held them as worthless.

As for the duc de Bourbon, she had found him less docile and less easy to manage than she had imagined him to be. She began to feel nervous lest her plans should miscarry. Her nervousness betrayed itself in frequent fits of passion which were often accompanied with violence.

On August 11th, 1829, the duke's servants noticed that their royal master's face and body were scratched and bruised. He tried to hide the marks, but they were visible to all beholders. Some months later, Sophie accounted for these marks by asserting that he had tried to commit suicide on that date and had failed in his attempt.

Worn out by this systematic bullying, the unhappy old man determined to appeal to the generosity of his family's enemy, the duc d'Orléans.

We find a piteous letter dated August 20th of this same year :—

## A Piteous Appeal

“ You must have remarked, *Monsieur*, that the affair commenced rather thoughtlessly without my knowledge by Mme. de Feuchères and which she has taken upon herself to persuade me to agree to, is extremely painful to me. Not only does it grieve me deeply by the sad memories which it awakens (the tragic death of the duc d’Enghien) and to which I cannot resign myself, but I must confess that other reasons prevent me giving all my attention to the matter just at the present moment. I rely upon your affection for me to persuade Mme. de Feuchères to leave me in peace upon this subject. . . .”

He concluded by begging the duc d’Orléans to recommend Sophie to abandon her plan of campaign and promised to prove his affection for his little godson in a substantial form.

We may imagine that the duc d’Orléans was rather surprised at this appeal to his generosity: this letter almost seemed to demand his protection. However, he immediately went to see Mme. de Feuchères and besought her to cease endeavouring to persuade the duc de Bourbon to do what he evidently did not wish to do. But this visit was only a feint. Mme. la baronne de Feuchères, once plain Sophie Dawes, was not likely to relinquish a dream which had occupied her every thought for so many years—and the duc d’Orléans knew it.

## Sophie Dawes

Again I repeat : it is impossible not to feel a certain amount of pity for the duc de Bourbon although he had had no pity on his wife when she, neglected and despised by the man who should have protected her, tried to live a respectable life amid the temptations with which women of rank and fashion are beset when they live apart from their natural protectors.

He was ill, alone, and he had no one to whom to turn in his miserable old age. To whom could he have appealed ? He had outlived his wife and his son, so rightly called *le duc Va-de-Bon-Cœur*. Could he appeal to the d'Orléans set ? He had done so, as we have just seen, but without much success. The interest which his wife's relations took in him was entirely selfish. Would it be wise to appeal to Charles X ? Now this king who, as the comte d'Artois, was an old enemy of the duc de Bourbon, with whom he had once fought a duel provoked by the duchesse de Bourbon's unseemly behaviour at one of the famous opera balls in 1778, had already more than he could do to look after his devoted subjects who were beginning to weary of this ruler who seemed so determined to reinstate all the abuses of the old *régime*.

No, there was no one who really cared what became of him.

## A Painful Scene

On August 29th, nine days after writing the above letter, another and a still more painful scene took place between the duke and his mistress.

M. de Surval was sitting that evening in the *salon* of Saint-Leu when he heard loud cries issuing from the billiard-room where the duke and the baroness were engaged in one of their usual confabulations. On hearing his name called, M. de Surval hastened to see what was the matter. He found the duke speechless with anger and trembling all over.

Mme. Sophie, who always had an answer or an explanation ready on the tip of her tongue, turned to M. de Surval as he entered and said :

“ Just look how excited *Monseigneur* is !—all about nothing, too. . . . Try and pacify him.”

Indignation gave the old man courage to exclaim :

“ Yes, *Madame*, it is an atrocious, a fearful thing to hold the knife to my throat in order to force me to do something which you know is repugnant to me ! ” Then seizing her hand he held it with an expressive gesture to his throat, adding :

“ Well, then, thrust the knife in ! thrust it in ! ”

M. de Surval was much shocked by this scene. The old duke's miserable existence touched and pained him. Thinking that anything would be

## A Stroke of Good Luck

a very polite gentleman who, on seeing our discomfort, stopped and offered his services. This was an unexpected stroke of good luck. Everyone declared that it would be delightful to drive in a tilted cart. After consulting the tutor and the governess, the gentleman's offer was accepted. He held out his arms to the children; Monseigneur le duc de Bordeaux, as quick as lightning, sprang into his arms and asked for the reins which were given to him. We all followed him. I took a seat close to the owner of the cart and begged him to take care of our treasure.

“ ‘ That is not an easy matter,’ replied he, ‘ for he is lively, intrepid and venturesome ; just look at him, he is actually driving us ! ’

“ The obliging stranger seemed so kind and so polite, that it gave me great pleasure to be able to tell him the name of him whom he was holding in his arms. He seemed so surprised and so delighted, that we immediately became good friends. I asked him his name. He was M. Hennequin, the celebrated lawyer, who, by chance, was going like ourselves to Saint-Leu and asked leave to drive us there.

“ On our arrival, the children went to dry their clothes at the kitchen fire. The *concierge* then offered to show us the *château* and we accepted his offer. A servant, who was showing us over



## Sophie Dawes

the place, went to the foot of the chief staircase and paused outside a door, the only door opening on the staircase, and said :

“ ‘ This is the room of Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon into which no one is allowed to go.’

“ ‘ All the more reason why we should see it ! ’ whispered M. de Cossé into my ear.

“ But the servant let us go in when he discovered who we were.

“ The room was most plainly furnished ; there was only one window,<sup>1</sup> to the right hand side on entering ; to the left was an alcove with a little door which the gentlemen of our party opened and discovered a secret staircase,<sup>2</sup> so small and so narrow that M. de Cossé said in joke to Mme. de Cossé and me :

“ ‘ You ladies certainly could not get through there.’ However he himself ran down it ; M. Hennequin followed him. They then found themselves on the entrance-floor in a room similar to that of Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon with an alcove and a door leading to the secret staircase. After having examined the room, they came upstairs again and found us looking out of the only window in the room ; they stood beside us and

<sup>1</sup> It is to be regretted that Mme. de Gontaut is not more accurate in her description of the duc de Bourbon's apartment. In Plan I we notice the fact that there were *two* windows in his bedroom.

<sup>2</sup> Mme. de Gontaut is again mistaken. The entrance to the secret staircase was not *behind* the alcove but in the passage marked H on Plan I.

## Letter to the Duc d'Orléans

watched the donkeys which had come to fetch us. M. Hennequin then conversed with me ; we both stood leaning out of the window which he himself had opened. I remember the subject of our conversation : it was about the situation of the two rooms. He then gave me his arm and we went to look for the children. . . .”

The duc d'Orléans often came to see the duc de Bourbon ; presents passed between the benefactor and the *protégés*.

We will now reproduce a letter written by Mme. de Feuchères to the duc d'Orléans, thanking him for a pâte d'Auvergne.

“ CHANTILLY, October 5th, 1829.

“ *Monseigneur*, I have received the letter which Your Royal Highness has done me the honour to write me, and I am much touched by your gracious attention ; as soon as the pâte d'Auvergne arrives, I shall hasten to have it served up to our good Prince. I am very sorry that the circumstances attending the voyage of the royal family of Naples obliged Your Royal Highnesses to stay away longer than you had intended to do. *Monseigneur* charges me to tell you that he also is very sorry ; but as he himself says : What can't be cured, must be endured. He wishes the Princesses to fix their own day for their visit to Chantilly ; but knowing how amiable they are, I take the liberty to observe

## CHAPTER V

Capitulation—Letters of gratitude from the Palais-Royal—Sophie unmasks—The popularity of the duc de Bourbon—Sophie demands her reward—Victory!—The Revolution of 1830—Terror of the last of the Condés—*Les Rois en exil*—The duc de Bourbon writes a manifesto—Plans for flight—Failure—Rumours of another will.

THE ill-health of the duc de Bourbon became more pronounced towards the end of 1829. Instead of restraining his appetite and recommending him to exercise moderation in the matter of eating and drinking, Mme. de Feuchères was always urging him to eat more than was good for him. The baron de Préjean gives us the following details of his illness :—

“ Mme. de Feuchères used to have her dinner brought up to the duke’s room. She persuaded him to eat whatever she herself ate ; and, although the duke’s physicians had ordered him to be very abstemious, she urged him to drink not only his usual beverage (*vin de Chambertin*), but even champagne, which helped to keep his legs in an inflamed condition, and caused the doctors



Photo Neudeck

CHANTILLY IN 1781  
*By Henri de Tort. From the picture in the Musée Conde*



## The Duke's Letters

to declare that they would never be able to cure him."

For some time past, Sophie had been in the habit of opening the duke's letters, especially those of any importance ; at first he had protested against this new act of tyranny ; but he might just as well have held his peace, for Sophie took no notice of his protests. M. de Surval, by dint of taking extraordinary precautions, managed with the help of the duke's faithful valet, Manoury, and his godson Obry, to fetch and carry such letters as their master did not wish his mistress to see.

We notice that the duc d'Orléans, in his letter of New Year's wishes to the duc de Bourbon, omits to send any messages to Sophie. His erstwhile guardian angel was too clever a woman not to notice this omission, which perhaps caused her to write the following letter to M. de Lambot, in which she excuses herself for not having been to call upon the duchesse d'Orléans on New Year's Day and says that she had not dared to do so :—

" CHANTILLY, *January 7th*, 1830.

" If you find an opportunity, my dear general, to speak of me either to *Monseigneur* or to the duchesse d'Orléans, I beg you to tell them that I deprived myself of the pleasure of calling upon

## Sophie Dawes

them on account of the delicate position in which I now find myself placed. It seemed to me that I should feel less embarrassed with my unfortunate self if I waited to pay my respects to them for the first time by invitation ; I shall be very glad for their Royal Highnesses to know that my sojourn in the country will not prevent me profiting by their kindness whenever they do me the honour to invite me to come and see them.

“ I send you my best wishes and hope that you will enjoy yourself in the capital.

“ SOPHIE DE FEUCHÈRES.”

This letter produced the desired effect : six days later Sophie received an invitation to a concert at the Palais-Royal and the following letter containing the good news for which she had waited nearly eight years :—

“ PARIS, *January 13th*, 1830.

“ I hasten, *Madame*, to inform you that the King has just told me that the late King’s commands concerning yourself are about to be completely revoked and effaced, that his Majesty will receive the ladies of his court during the month of February and that you may attend this reception as formerly without being obliged to go through the formality of being presented again. The King, having authorized me to inform you of this decision, I do not wish to lose a minute in communicating such good news to

## Sophie's Ambition Realized

you. I must also tell you that, on informing the King that you were ready to leave the Palais-Bourbon and to reside in a private house, the King authorized me to tell you from him *that you were to do nothing of the sort*, that he considered the great services which you have rendered to all the family as rendered to himself, that he was delighted to be able to prove this fact to you, and that it would grieve him to cause Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon and yourself such unnecessary sorrow. Mme. la duchesse d'Orléans and my sister, who were present and were not idle, charge me to congratulate you from them and to tell you that, as soon as the weather permits them to come and visit Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon at Chantilly, they shall give themselves that pleasure.

"Kindly give him our love, and believe me ever yours gratefully,

"LOUIS-PHILIPPE D'ORLÉANS."

We learn from Sophie herself that it was with tears of gratitude streaming down her cheeks that she wrote the following pæan of praise and thanks to her influential friend :—

"PARIS, *January 15th*, 1830.

"*Monseigneur*, Would that I could express to Your Royal Highness all I feel at this moment ! but your letter has moved me so that I cannot find words to express my gratitude. I rejoice



## Sophie Dawes

at the prospect of the happiness which I am about to impart to our poor sick Prince at Chantilly. I cannot refrain from shedding tears of joy. I dare flatter myself that Your Royal Highness knows my heart and can guess what is passing therein.

"I take the liberty to enclose a letter which I have just received from Chantilly. I shall not fail to keep Your Royal Highness well advised as to our dear Prince's health. Allow me to place the homage of my profound gratitude at Your Royal Highness's feet.

"SOPHIE DAWES, BARONNE DE FEUCHÈRES."

A few days later she writes from Chantilly whither she had gone to rest awhile from the noise and bustle of Paris :—

"CHANTILLY, *January 18th*, 1830.

"*Monseigneur*, knowing how busy Your Royal Highness always is, I fear that I may be indiscreet if I write too often. I have no news to give you. I found our good Prince in about the same state as when I left him. He still keeps his bed and suffers much at times ; but we are reassured because his doctor does not seem alarmed ; he attributes the Prince's great sufferings to the extreme cold. We are surrounded with snow and ice as if we were in Siberia ; so I would not for the world that the Princesses should come to Chantilly ; notwithstanding the pleasure which

## The Duke Moved to Tears

their presence would give me, it would be too cruel to expose their Highnesses' health to any risk. As I had foreseen, *Monseigneur*, your kind and excellent letter touched the heart of our dear Prince so deeply that he was moved to shed tears ; he was particularly touched by the gracious manner in which his Majesty kindly revoked, without making any stipulations, the command which afflicted him through me. He says that this act reminds him of the King's old friendship for him ; in short, *Monseigneur*, though I might write you a volume, I should still be unable to remember all the kind things which the dear Prince said concerning this matter. He begs me to thank you a thousand times, as well as Mme. la duchesse d'Orléans and your august sister, for what you three have done for me ; he says that you have smoothed the last few remaining years of his life, because he now sees that my future will be assured. In short, it is a great consolation, after so many years of sorrow, to be able to fulfil my duty of gratitude and affection towards your beloved relative, and that with the consent and approbation of his whole family.

“BARONNE DE FEUCHÈRES.”

Sophie's appearance at the concert given by the duc and duchesse d'Orléans in the Palais-Royal caused quite a scandal. This appearance was but the prelude to her triumphant return to court.

## Sophie Dawes

We find yet another rough copy of a letter from the duc d'Orléans to Mme. de Feuchères, concerning a projected visit to Saint-Leu whither the duc de Bourbon had gone :—

“ I thank you very much, *Madame*, for all you say in your letter which M. le général de Lambot has just given me to read. From what he has told me of Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon's plans, I think I shall probably come to Saint-Leu on Sunday next and that I shall bring d'Aumale and his two brothers, Nemours and Joinville. We shall arrive about half-past two o'clock and, if you will allow us to do so, we shall leave after dinner, either at eight o'clock or at half-past eight at the latest, so that the children may be in bed by ten o'clock.

“ I long, *Madame*, to hear the details which you have kindly promised to give me, and I shall be delighted if we can continue the conversation on Sunday which we began under such happy auspices at the Palais-Bourbon and which was interrupted by my departure.

“ Our Princesses join with me in assuring you of our gratitude for your kind actions, and say they will be delighted to thank you by word of mouth.”

The duc de Bourbon's health was now so bad that he was forced to take to his bed. Mme. de Feuchères kept the duc d'Orléans well advised as

## The Duke's Illness

to the progress of the illness and this, notwithstanding the fact that she was constantly driving up to Paris to superintend the preparations for her reappearance at court. She wrote to the d'Orléans family every day.

“ CHANTILLY, *January 29th*, 1830.

“ *Monseigneur*, I did not trouble Your Royal Highness because I had nothing new to tell you concerning the health of our Prince. He has not left his room yet and is unable to dine at table or to go up to the drawing-room ; his illness, without being dangerous, causes him a great deal of suffering ; he sees nobody, not even the members of his household ; I am constantly reminding him of Your Royal Highnesses' tender affection for him, and he is much touched thereat.

“ I think, *Monseigneur*, that his visit here will not be prolonged, because he has decided to go back to Paris on February 1st ; and so, at his wish, we all start Monday. If any alteration should occur, I will be sure to acquaint Your Royal Highnesses, and I shall be ready, as ever, to receive any commands with which you may kindly honour me.

“ I beg you to believe, *Monseigneur*, that my devotion to your august family is unbounded. I remain with profound respect your very humble and obedient servant,

“ BARONNE DE FEUCHÈRES.”

## Sophie Dawes

As the day for her reappearance at court approached, Mrs. Sophie Dawes felt symptoms of nervousness. What an awful thing it would be if she made some blunder and gave the tittering crew of courtiers cause to laugh at her!

Like a true Englishwoman, she was always ready with her pen. Quick as thought, she writes off to the duc d'Orléans :—

“ PALAIS-BOURBON, *February 4th*, 1830.

“ As I owe to Your Royal Highnesses the favour which has been accorded to me, I do not think it right for me to act entirely on my own responsibility concerning an idea which has just occurred to me without first submitting it to her Royal Highness, Mme. la duchesse d'Orléans and *Mademoiselle*.

“ Before appearing at court next Sunday, I think it would be more respectful if I were to write to Mme. la Dauphine as well as to her Royal Highness, *Madame*. I take the liberty to enclose the rough copies of these two letters ; and then, when I have the honour to see Your Royal Highnesses, perhaps you will tell me if I ought to send them or not.

“ The baron de Surval must have had the honour to see Your Royal Highness last night and to give you news of our Prince ; I shall have the honour to give you further particulars. . . .

“ BARONNE DE FEUCHÈRES.”



**MARIE-THERÈSE-CHARLOTTE OF FRANCE, DAUGHTER OF LOUIS XVI.,  
BORN AT VERSAILLES ON DECEMBER 19TH, 1778**

*Portrait published on the occasion of her Journey to Bdle on December 26th, 1795*



## The Great Event

At last the great day dawns. On the very day of her reappearance at court, Sophie finds time, amid the terrible bustle and running to and fro which always accompany such occasions, between the visits of her hairdresser and her mantua-maker who has come to put in the last pin, to scribble off a letter to her grateful *protégé*.

“ PALAIS-BOURBON, *February 7th*, 1830.

“ *Monseigneur*, in order that Your Royal Highness may realize the present state of our poor Prince and understand why he dislikes receiving visitors, I think it best to send you in confidence the two little letters which I received from him to-day. Does not Your Royal Highness think that it would be better to postpone your visit to Chantilly? I am going there to-morrow, and Your Royal Highness can rely upon me to keep you well advised as to any change in *Monseigneur's* condition.

“ I am quite in a flutter at the thought of the great event which takes place to-day; I regret one thing very much and that is: that I shall not have the honour to pay my respects to their Royal Highnesses, *Mme. la duchesse d'Orléans* and *Mademoiselle*. If I did not fear to be indiscreet, I should ask permission, on leaving the Tuileries, to place the homage of my gratitude at their feet.

“ Kindly present my respects, *Monseigneur*, to



## Sophie Dawes

*all* their Royal Highnesses without omitting *our* little prince, the duc d'Aumale, who, I hope, does not forget me.

"I am Your Royal Highness's very humble, very obedient servant.

"BARONNE DE FEUCHÈRES."

We will now hear what the comte de Ménard says about Sophie's reappearance at court in his *Souvenirs intimes*.

"Mme. de Feuchères' reappearance at court took place without her being able to take much pride in the fact. She was in a very false position; she was made to swallow many a bitter pill. But she was determined to play at being a fine lady; and, provided that she could say: 'I go to the palace,' it mattered little to her by which door she entered. She never forgave *Madame* for not having espoused her cause and *Madame*, who did not respect her, often said: 'I prefer her to appear here as presented by my uncle than by myself.' You see that I was quite right when I said that Mme. de Feuchères had rendered important services to the d'Orléans family; it is more than probable that the duc d'Aumale will profit by *Madame's* refusal to accept an almost princely dowry for *Mademoiselle*."

To the honour of the duchesse de Berry, who was by no means perfect herself, we must own

## Extracts from a Diary

that she was more than disgusted when she learnt that the adventuress had been received by the king, the Dauphin and even the Dauphine. The vicomte Sosthène de la Rochefoucauld, a fervent royalist if there was ever one, was so moved with indignation that he actually wrote a letter of protest to Charles X.

During the month of February, the prince Louis de Rohan paid several visits to Chantilly in order to inquire after the health of the aged duc de Bourbon. So frequent were those visits, that the duc d'Orléans became alarmed, and said to general de Lambot :

“ A codicil is soon made ! ”

We will now give a few extracts from the diary of M. Cuvillier-Fleury ; they give a vivid picture of the Bourbon-Dawes *ménage*.

“ April 29th, 1830. M. le duc d'Orléans went to dine with Mme. de F—— ; this lady, the duc de Bourbon's acknowledged mistress, has just been received at court, so etiquette has no need to find fault with the prince's conduct ; besides the interest of his son, the duc d'Aumale would excuse him, if he needed an excuse for dining with a pretty woman.

“ April 30th, 1830. To-day M. le duc d'Orléans took me with the princes to the house of M. le duc de Bourbon or rather to that of Mme. la baronne

## Sophie Dawes

de F—— who received their Royal Highnesses in her charming apartment in the Palais-Bourbon.

“Mme. de F—— is a tall, handsome person, very well *preserved*, as we say, with a proud but pleasing physiognomy ; she speaks broken French ; she is very fond of children whom she spoils dreadfully. She gave a splendid breakfast-party to all the company ; the duc d’Aumale was seated on her right, the duc d’Orléans on her left ; the duc de Bourbon sat at one of the corners. He seemed sad and bored ; in fact, he is always bored when he is not in the country. His eyes are red ; he is pale and has a slight limp ; he only uttered a few polite words to show that he was head of the house.

“A little play was acted in Mme. de F——’s apartment after the breakfast was over ; there was a large audience composed of children ; the troupe from the Théâtre Comte acted *Le Sourd*, and Comte himself played a number of amusing tricks and distributed presents to all the children who departed intoxicated with pleasure.

“Sunday, May 2nd, 1830. Mme. de F—— has been received at Neuilly. She was seated at table on the duc d’Orléans’ right hand. In the evening she played a game of whist with the duc de Bourbon ; she was less amiable than she had been in her own home ; her embarrassment was the cause perhaps ; but when she entered the room, she was not the only person who was embarrassed. Mme. la duchesse d’Orléans advanced

## A Curious Game

two steps to meet her, congratulated her, returned to her place and left her ladies to do the rest.

"In the evening we played at *Biribi* ; it is a curious game at which everyone screams, especially the princes.

"July 25th, 1830. The duc d'Orléans went to spend Sunday, the 25th, at Saint-Leu, together with his sons, at the residence of the prince de Condé. There were a number of people there, a huge dinner-party and a military band ; the regiment of lancers, under the command of M. de Chabannes, assisted. Cottu dined there ; M. de Vitrolles<sup>1</sup> also. In the drawing-room, after coffee, the guests broke up into little groups and began to discuss politics. Vitrolles went up to where M. le duc d'Orléans was standing, and with infinite wit and address, sang the praises of absolute power which met with more than one smile of approbation on the faces of his noble audience."

On July 17th, 1830, we find a short note from the still invalided duc de Bourbon to Sophie, begging her to persuade the duc d'Orléans to postpone one of his all too numerous visits.

<sup>1</sup> *Baron de Vitrolles* (1774-1854), formerly a volunteer in the Armée de Condé ; his name was erased from the list of *émigrés* after the 18th *brumaire* ; he took an important part in the Restoration. Nominated minister at Florence in 1827 by Charles X, then *pair de France* in 1830, he refused to support the July monarchy and died in obscurity in 1854.

## Sophie Dawes

*" Friday, July 17th, 1830.*

" Please tell M. le duc d'Orléans that I shall consider it a great favour if he will kindly postpone his visit until the weather is somewhat cooler and until I can stand a little on my legs. Amen, dear Sophie ; I embrace you with all my heart."

On July 25th, a huge *fête* was given at Saint-Leu to which all the members of the d'Orléans family were invited.

Two days later the Revolution broke out.

The year 1830 was an eventful year for France and a fatal one to the last of the Condés. When Charles X, in consequence of his tyranny and obstinate determination to go his own way no matter the cost, forfeited the throne of France and was forced to seek shelter in England, the refuge of exiled kings, he was not the only sufferer. The duc de Bourbon, now seventy-four years of age, felt that he had lived too long.

He was out hunting when he heard the fatal news.

" Ah ! " cried he, " it is too much to have seen two revolutions ; I have lived quite long enough."

He wanted to hurry off at once to offer his condolences to Charles X who was then at Saint-Cloud waiting to see what the morrow would bring ; an order from the dethroned monarch obliged him to remain at Saint-Leu. On learning

## The Duc de Berry's Children

that Charles X had been obliged to beat a retreat to Rambouillet, the second halting-place on the long road to exile, the duke burst into tears, crying : " Oh ! my God ! have pity on those poor children whose father they have killed and who now have no one to protect them ! "

After all, the children of the murdered duc de Berry were not so much to be pitied ; they were only to join the little group of exiled princelings of whom Alphonse Daudet wrote so charmingly in his *Rois en exil*.

*Mademoiselle*, the eldest child of the duc and duchesse de Berry, must have been a wonderfully intelligent and affectionate child if we believe Mme. de Gontaut who, in her memoirs, gives one or two amusing anecdotes of her little charge's pretty ways. The king (Charles X), on the occasion of the prince de Polignac being elected prime minister in 1830, had to write a speech. Mme. de Gontaut says :—

" When I, having read his speech, gave it back to the King, he asked me what I thought of it ; I told him frankly that, although I knew nothing about the matter, it seemed to me rather severe. To which he replied : ' They deserve it. Are you aware, then, that all my actions and even my very words are misinterpreted ? Do you not know that intrigues to undermine my

## Sophie Dawes

authority are everywhere, and especially in Paris ? Oh ! I swear to you, I cannot bear it ; it is horrible ; it is enough to make one give up the job and go off ! ’

“ *Mademoiselle* was scribbling and listening at the same time ; she looked at the King and said : ‘ And then what shall we do, *bon papa ?* ’ The King, having noticed that it was time to go and read his speech, said good-bye. I then saw *Mademoiselle* seize the box of wafers and rush to the window. I paid no attention but followed His Majesty.

“ M. de Chabrol met the King at the door of the council-chamber and excused himself for being a trifle late ; he said that he had been trying to read a placard which was placed in the window of the King’s study and which had attracted such a crowd that he had been unable to get near enough to read it. His Majesty, much astonished, sent a gentleman-usher to look into the matter. He returned, bearing in his hand *Mademoiselle’s* composition which ran as follows : *House to let !*

“ On examining it, the King remembered how he had grumbled and the question which must have put it into *Mademoiselle’s* clever little head to write this scrawl. Everybody was obliged to laugh for a minute or two.

“ Dear *Mademoiselle*, who had fondly imagined that she would be able to amuse the King with this innocent joke, was rather taken aback at

## A Child's Idea of Kings

the result ; she asked for forgiveness which she obtained together with a kiss."

On learning of the death of Louis XVIII, that unfortunate martyr to gout who, for the last few years of his life, was unable to walk, this same little girl uttered a very strange speech. We again quote Mme. de Gontaut, her devoted governess.

"Day was beginning to dawn ; I went to *Monseigneur's* bed and awoke him ; he was not surprised, said nothing and allowed himself to be dressed. Not so *Mademoiselle* ; I gently broke the sad news to her of the misfortune which had befallen her family. I was much agitated. She asked me several questions and then said : ' Where is *bon papa* ? ' I told her that he was still in Paris but that he was coming to Saint-Cloud, and then I added : ' Your *bon papa* is king, *Mademoiselle*, for the King is no more.' She thought for a minute and then said : ' King ? oh ! that is indeed the worst part of the story ! ' Astonished, I tried to make her explain what she meant ; but she would do nothing but repeat her little speech. It then occurred to me that she probably imagined that all kings were unable to walk and had to be wheeled about in arm-chairs."

Another memorialist tells us that when still younger, *Mademoiselle* was requested by her great-



## Sophie Dawes

uncle, Louis XVIII, to repeat the names of the kings of France. She got along very well until she reached the name of Louis XVI<sup>1</sup> who went by the uncomplimentary nickname of *Louis le Gros* (Louis the Fat), and then she suddenly paused, looked very hard at her relative, and bent her little head down as if afraid to go on.

"Well?" said Louis XVIII, who deserved the nickname far more than his unlucky predecessor on the throne of France. "Well! Louis——?" and he tried to prompt her, thinking that she had forgotten. The little child, with flaming cheeks, gave one glance at her stout great-uncle and again looked at the floor.

The king, seeing her confusion and guessing the cause, took her in his arms, kissed her and told her to run away and play.

The duc de Bourbon's regret for the departure of Charles X was not unmingled with fears for his own safety. Had he not lived through '93 and the *Cent Jours*? Did he not dread lest he should hear the old war-cry: "*Guerre aux châteaux! Paix aux chaumières*"? But the revolutionists of 1830 were very different men to those of '93, and the duc de Bourbon had no reason to dread any violence on their part. Was he not close to

<sup>1</sup> Louis XVI, like his predecessor on the throne of France, Louis VI, bore this nickname.

## The Duke fears an Attack

"God's hour" ? and had he not refrained from taking any active part in politics since his fiasco in la Vendée in 1815 ? However, so much did he fear an attack, that he, during the first days of the *Révolution de Juillet*, kept horses ready saddled in case of an emergency. He was much reassured by the arrival of his mail-bag, for on the envelopes of all his letters were scribbled these words : "Long live the duc de Bourbon ! he need not be alarmed, no one will hurt him." These mysterious messages were a daily occurrence.

The d'Orléans family were at Neuilly when they learnt on July 26th, 1830, of the Coup d'État, the work of Charles X and his ministers. This news, the harbinger of the great event for which the duc d'Orléans and his sister were already well prepared and for which they had plotted and planned, had a remarkable effect upon the inmates of the *château* of Neuilly. The *salon* became a sort of miniature *Chambre des députés*. The duc d'Orléans, still uncertain as to what price he would have to pay for his share in what was to come, was depressed, said little, and contented himself with listening to what his visitors had to say. When he did break silence, it was to give expression to this significant sentence concerning the king's conduct :

"They are mad, they are going to get them-

## Sophie Dawes

selves exiled again ! I've been exiled twice already : that's quite enough for me. *I shall remain in France !* "

Mme. Adélaïde was perhaps the most unconcerned of all the actors in this drama ; she, the Egeria of the future king, Louis-Philippe, expressed herself with indignation at the conduct of Charles X and exhorted her brother to step into the gap. As for Marie-Amélie, her timid, easy-going disposition caused her to look upon this event more as a trial which had to be borne, than as a blessing. She bent her head as if in prayer and appeared quite overcome.

On July 28th the little party at the *château* of Neuilly received a visit from the celebrated painter Ary Scheffer, who informed them that the royalists had been victorious, that the Parisians were disheartened, that their defeat was only a question of time, and that Thiers and Mignet had sought safety in flight.

This news, as we can guess, was most unwelcome to the future king and his sister ; fearing reprisals, the family retreated to a small pavilion in the grounds of Neuilly.

A sigh of relief greeted the princesse Marie d'Orléans when she came running in from the garden with the glad news.

" Victory ! victory ! " cried she, " the royal



CHÂTEAU DE NEUILLY, PALACE OF THE ORLEANS FAMILY



## A State of Uncertainty

guards have surrendered, and have been disarmed. Come back to the drawing-room ! ”

On the following day, the duc d'Orléans' man of business (like master, like man) came to confirm this glad news. He found the duchess alone: the duke had taken the precaution to beat a retreat to his country house at le Raincy on the previous evening ; he was not quite certain what the infuriated royalists might or might not do.

M. Dupin says in his memoirs :—

“ I was ushered into the presence of the duchesse d'Orléans who was alone. When I informed her that it was proposed to intrust the management of the affairs of the State to the duke, she seemed much moved. . . . She said to me : ‘ But the duc d'Orléans is an honest man ; he will never consent to undertake anything against the King.’ . . . The duchess began to shed tears. . . . I told her that I only wished to inform the duc d'Orléans of what had just happened and I expressed a desire to see Mme. Adélaïde. . . . The latter was much more determined. ‘ I do not know,’ said she, ‘ what my brother intends to do ; but I do know that he loves his country and I think he will do everything to save it from anarchy.’ . . . ”

To MM. Thiers and Scheffer, Mme. Adélaïde said : “ They may make my brother president,

## Sophie Dawes

a member of the national guard, whatever they please, provided they do not make him an exile." This seemingly ingenious and patriotic little speech told M. Thiers what he had come to learn ; turning towards Mme. Adélaïde, he said :

" *Madame*, your family owe the crown to your efforts."

The duchesse d'Orléans welcomed Casimir Delavigne in a tremulous voice and thanked him for his visit of condolence—was it not rather a visit of congratulation ?—and said :

" My husband, as an honest man, has many scruples."

Whereupon Mme. Adélaïde broke in :

" The Chamber of Deputies must make up its mind ; but when that is done, my brother must not hesitate ; if necessary I myself will go to Paris and I will promise in his name on the place of the Palais-Royal in the midst of the men of the barricades."

The duchesse d'Orléans and Mme. Adélaïde then went to visit the duc d'Orléans who had left his hiding-place at le Raincy and now lay concealed in a pavilion in the park of Neuilly ; they informed him of the success which had attended the proclamation (probably the work of Mme. Adélaïde) published in Paris that morning ; in this proclamation it was said :—

## The Duke's Manifesto

"Charles X cannot return to Paris ; he has caused the people's blood to flow. . . . A republic would expose us to fearful divisions. All Europe would quarrel with us. . . . The duc d'Orléans is a devoted prince . . . etc., etc."

The duke set off on foot for Paris where he arrived overcome with fatigue, but not too fatigued to prepare his *signed* manifesto in which he styled himself lieutenant-general of the kingdom.

Having bid her husband *au revoir*, the duchesse d'Orléans retired to her bedroom where she relieved her feelings by bursting into tears. Unlike Mme. Adélaïde, her husband's conduct had had a most depressing effect upon her.

When Mme. de Boigne tried to cheer her up by comparing the duc d'Orléans to William III of England, Marie-Amélie's grief redoubled. She sobbed through her tears :

"God forbid ! God forbid ! my dear ; they would call him the usurper ! "

On Mme. de Boigne recommending her to go up to Paris in her state equipage attended by her servants clad in the gorgeous d'Orléans liveries, she replied :

"It would be very repugnant to me to do such a thing. It would look as if we were setting the world at defiance, as if we wanted to show off our victory . . . you understand what I



## Sophie Dawes

mean . . . over the others. . . . I should prefer to arrive at the Palais-Royal quite quietly, without any show."

And that is what happened.

That very night the duchesse d'Orléans, Mme. Adélaïde and all the young d'Orléans princes and princesses, seven children in all, left Neuilly by a garden gate, hailed a public conveyance, a sort of omnibus called a *Caroline*, which happened to be passing along the road to Paris, took their seats in it and were eventually deposited on the Place Louis XV ; they could go no farther owing to the barricades with which the streets of Paris were still encumbered. The omnibus driver must have puzzled his brains to discover the identity of his strange "fares" when he received a piece of gold in payment for his services. Mme. Adélaïde must have been in a generous mood that night, for she forbore to ask for change.

The next few days were days of anxiety and trouble for the d'Orléans family. Paris was in a piteous condition ; bread was scarce ; the hospitals were full of wounded ; on the night of August 3rd a fearful thunder-storm broke over the city. The duchesse d'Orléans, her sister-in-law and the young d'Orléans princesses visited the hospitals and distributed largess.

Charles X and the duc d'Angoulême, having

## Louis-Philippe

signed their abdication on August 4th, the duc d'Orleans threw off the mask which he had worn for so many years.

When the duc de Broglie and the comte Molé proposed that Philippe d'Orléans should be called to the throne because he was a Bourbon, Odilon Barrot (one of Mme. de Feuchères' familiars) and M. Dupin retorted that Louis-Philippe, *although* a Bourbon, should be hailed, not as *king of France* by the grace of God, but as *king of the French* by the will of the nation.

M. Raoul Arnaud says of Louis-Philippe:—

“The new king was fifty-six years of age; he was tall, robust and still looked young, notwithstanding his corpulency; he was very agile in his movements. His face was fat and broad; bushy whiskers adorned his cheeks; his large and projecting eyes were quite expressionless. His manners were so affectedly free and easy that he might almost have been accused of vulgarity. He preferred plain clothes to gay uniforms; he usually wore nankeen trousers, a blue coat with brass buttons, a huge white waistcoat and a grey hat, and carried the legendary umbrella. He looked like a peaceable member of the national guard; he possessed the good qualities of a respectable shopkeeper. He was a plain *bourgeois* without any noble aspirations, who regulated his expenses, if not with stinginess,

## Sophie Dawes

at least with parsimony. He owed his fortune to his love of money, to his extreme partiality for going to law, to his orderly habits and to his love for work ; and he won his throne by double-dealing, by his clever manœuvring and his base flattery. He was always on the look-out for subterfuges ; he knew how to feign feelings which he did not possess, and never allowed himself to be baulked for want of a little meanness. His self-confidence made him despise his fellow-creatures. He was not lacking in courage, but his character was unstable and he was more sly than large-minded. He was domineering and arrogant, although he tried to appear conciliatory and liberal-minded. His scepticism in religious matters was astonishing ; the precepts learnt in his childhood had not effaced from his mind certain inborn prejudices and his family conceit. He had plenty of common sense and was far-seeing, but he was irresolute. He hesitated and procrastinated, evaded important questions, drew back and tried in every way to keep independent. Without the princesse Adélaïde, who loved to push herself forward quite as much as her brother loved to imagine that he was keeping in the background, whose manners were those of a trooper and whose ambition was boundless, he would never have been able to make up his mind to accept the crown, although, for the space of fifteen years, he had done everything which lay in his power to obtain it."

## Precautions for Safety

The duc de Bourbon's hatred for the d'Orléans family burst forth with renewed vigour when Louis-Philippe's intrigues were finally crowned with success and he was *offered* the throne of France. During the struggles between *légitimistes*, *bonapartistes* and *républicains*, Mme. Sophie made frequent excursions to Paris to see how matters were progressing ; she, too, was nervous. She went so far as to have her coat of arms effaced from the doors of her carriage, and she tried to persuade the duke to drop the title of duc de Bourbon and to take the more popular one of prince de Condé. The duke likewise took precautions, for we learn from one of his biographers that he commissioned his godson, Obry, to purchase a tricolour flag in Chantilly. During a visit from his dentist, M. Hostein, he asked eagerly what was happening in Paris and what people said about him. M. Hostein says :—

“ I took the liberty to inform him that matters seemed settling down, that no more cases of pillage had taken place, that *Monseigneur* was beloved, etc., etc., and that he had no enemies, to all of which he deigned to reply with a smile :

“ ‘ Oh ! I know *some* enemies, and those are the hares and rabbits against whom I wage such cruel warfare.’

“ He was then gracious enough to tell me that

## Sophie Dawes

the pillage of the *château* of Saint-Cloud had terrified him ; that he feared that the thieves, on being suppressed in Paris, would be dispersed among the outskirts of the city and would pillage the *châteaux* and private properties. Then taking up a folded paper which was lying on his writing-table, he added :

“ ‘ Would you believe it ? I, too, have written a proclamation which I, at one time, thought of affixing to the gates of my *château*. In it I declare that I have given the *château* of Saint-Leu to the king Philippe,<sup>1</sup> and I beg that no one does any harm to my servants ; overwhelmed with years and infirmities, I only have to die.”

Immediately after his accession to the throne, Louis-Philippe sent frequent messages to the old duc de Bourbon, telling him not to be anxious, to have no fear and not to think of leaving his fatherland. Notwithstanding all these reassuring messages, the prince seemed determined to leave Saint-Leu.

As time passed and things seemed settling down in France, the duke's *entourage* noticed that their master, instead of growing calmer, seemed to become more nervous and uneasy. It was clear to everybody that he was meditating some serious step. He seemed to wish to avoid the baroness,

<sup>1</sup> Louis-Philippe, on becoming king, first took the title of Philippe I.

## Plans for Flight

even to dislike hearing her name mentioned ; in fact, he appeared to be in a state of unaccountable nervousness.

Sophie continued her visits to Paris where she wished to keep in touch with the new monarch.

Marie-Amélie, now queen of the French, sent word that she was soon coming to visit her aged relative at Saint-Leu where he was still residing.

On Sophie's return from one of her numerous trips to Paris, Mr. James Dawes informed his aunt that the duc de Bourbon had lately been writing a number of letters, and that it was his private opinion that the old gentleman was going to try and make his escape.

Suspicious that something of the sort was about to happen had been aroused in Sophie's mind by the fact that her slave had lately objected to let her read his letters.

One morning, early in the month of August, Sophie came into the duke's room rather early and found him very busy writing ; his writing-table was covered with papers. On seeing his task-mistress standing in the doorway, the duke hastily gathered his papers together and turned his back upon her.

" What ! *Monseigneur !* " cried Sophie, " writing so early in the morning ? "

The duke still said nothing and continued to

## Sophie Dawes

gather up his papers. Whereupon Sophie advanced nearer to him and said in a tone of reproach when he pushed her gently away :

“ What ? not show it to your little Sophie ? ”

The fact of the matter was that Mme. de Feuchères was afraid that, as the duc d'Aumale's future, as the king's son, was amply provided for, her elderly lover would revoke the will of August 30th, 1829, and make the little exiled duc de Bordeaux his residuary legatee. And in this she guessed aright, for the duc de Bourbon was more than determined to make another will before he died.

Had he not promised to act the part of a father to *Mademoiselle* and to the then unborn duc de Bordeaux on learning of the assassination of the duc de Berry ? If he had not fulfilled his promise, it was thanks to the intrigues of the Feuchères-Flassans clan.

When the duc de Bourbon announced his intention of going to drink the waters of Bourbonne during the third week in August, Mme. de Feuchères expressed no surprise and offered no opposition. However as the days passed by and nothing more was said about the matter, she began to think that she had been needlessly alarmed. And yet James Dawes, who took care to be always hovering near his aunt's victim, continued to assure



*Photo J. K. Montagu*

COPY OF OLD WOOD-CUT TAKEN FROM 'LES SECRETS DE SAINT-LEU',  
IN WHICH SOPHIE DAWES IS REPRESENTED LISTENING BEHIND A  
CURTAIN





## Failure

her that something was in the air and that he was perfectly certain that the old duc de Bourbon was about to elope.

The duke now gave out that he intended to move to Chantilly, as he considered himself safer there than at Saint-Leu, should any fresh disturbances occur.

But this was only a feint to conceal plans for a journey which he hoped to accomplish with the help of M. de Choulot, his faithful valet Manoury who had been in the duke's service for sixteen years, and one of the gamekeepers at Saint-Leu. With a view to making his escape, the duc de Bourbon instructed M. de Surval to go to Paris and to draw money to the amount of one million francs. When all seemed going splendidly, this plan failed, alas ! owing to the fact that the baron de Flassans had a disagreeable trick of listening at keyholes and then imparting the information thus obtained to his dear aunt.<sup>1</sup>

In future the duc de Bourbon was practically a prisoner in his own *château*.

It was about the second week in August that a strange rumour was spread both at Saint-Leu and in Paris : people began to whisper to each

<sup>1</sup> Later, in giving evidence Sophie denied that the duke had ever planned to leave the country, "because," said she, "had he done so, he would have been sure to confide his plans to me."

## Sophie Dawes

other that the duc de Bourbon had lately made another will in which Sophie's name did not figure ; whenever a rumour is spread, there is always someone who knows more about the matter in question than his neighbours. On this occasion, those who professed to be in the secret said that the duke had made the little exiled duc de Bordeaux his residuary legatee.

Who spread this rumour ? Certainly not Sophie. Was it likely that the duc de Bourbon would make a will in favour of Henri de France ? Had he at last made up his mind to accomplish the duty which he had sworn to fulfil on learning that the father of the *Enfant du Miracle* had been assassinated ? Had he not left it too late ?

It is difficult to say whether the will was ever actually made and signed. But subsequent events give us cause to think that the will was made, signed and witnessed and that it was the discovery of this document which put an end to the duke's sufferings.

The rumour had one effect in that it caused Mme. de Feuchères a great deal of anxiety.

She was determined to get all she could before the ship sank ; she recommenced her importunities, and openly expressed a wish that the duke, instead of leaving the *château* and estates of Saint-Leu, Montmorency, Enghien, Mortefontaine

## M. de Surval's Suggestion

and Boissy to her in his will, should make them over to her during his lifetime. On M. de Surval remarking that the legal costs of such a complicated transaction would be very heavy, and on his suggestion that, in order to meet the expense, it would be as well to sell the *château* of Saint-Leu to Mme. Adélaïde, Louis-Philippe's sister, Mme. de Feuchères thought better of the matter and said no more.

## CHAPTER VI

The duc de Bourbon meets with an "accident"—Queen Marie-Amélie pays a visit to Saint-Leu—Plans for escape—Sophie prepares for flight—The duke's saint's day is kept by the villagers—Another family scene—Visit of M. de Cossé-Brissac—The night of the tragedy—Discovery of the duc de Bourbon's dead body—Funeral of the last of the Condés.

WE now reach the last act of this extraordinary tragedy which, owing to the peculiar circumstances which surrounded the departure from life's stage of the principal male character, might almost be called a mystery-play.

About eight o'clock on the morning of August 11th, 1830, Obry, the duc de Bourbon's godchild, while passing along the corridor outside the old gentleman's bedroom in the *château* of Saint-Leu, met the duke still clad in his night attire, without either shoes or stockings and trembling all over with excitement. On seeing the young man, the duke called him to his side, showed him his left eye which was bleeding and his cheek which was marked as if a finger-nail had been dug into the flesh, and said :

## A Strange "Accident"

"Mme. de Feuchères is a bad, spiteful woman. Look what she has done ! She is a spiteful, spiteful woman !"

However when Manoury came to call his master at his usual time half an hour later, the duke gave quite a different version of the affair ; he showed his eye to his valet and made a statement to the effect that he had struck his head against the *table de nuit* during the night. On Manoury remarking that the table was lower than the bed, the duke made no reply.

A few minutes later, he said to Manoury :

"Find out for me if Mme. de Feuchères is going to breakfast with me and then let me know. Act as if you had not noticed anything."

When M. Bonnie, his surgeon, came as usual to apply the dressings to the duke's legs, the old gentleman asked if he had seen Mme. de Feuchères yet ?

"No !" replied M. Bonnie.

Whereupon the duke said :

"If she does not mention this accident to you, don't say anything about it to her."

"Does she know then ?" asked the surgeon.

"Yes, she knows," replied the duke.

Manoury brought back word that the baroness had not started for Paris yet and that she had told him to lay breakfast for two persons in her

## Sophie Dawes

room and then she would start immediately afterwards.

At twelve o'clock the duke breakfasted alone in his private apartments while Sophie got into her carriage and was driven to Paris where she arrived at two o'clock in the afternoon.

While arranging a rug in his master's dressing-room that same morning, Manoury noticed a letter lying under the door leading to the secret staircase mentioned in Mme. de Gontaut's memoirs<sup>1</sup> ; this staircase communicated with Mme. de Feuchères' private apartments, as my readers have probably guessed.

Manoury carried the letter to the prince who, having read it, said :

" I am not a good hand at telling lies ; I told you that I had hurt myself during the night—it was not true. The fact of the matter is that, in endeavouring to open the door leading to the secret staircase in order to let Mme. de Feuchères out of my room, I fell upon my side and hit my forehead against the panel of the door. I nearly did for myself that time ! "

Notwithstanding this plausible version of the accident, the duke, two days later, requested Manoury to sleep at the door of his bedroom in future. This Manoury was quite willing to do,

<sup>1</sup> See page 130.

## One of Sophie's Spies

but at the same time he begged his royal master to realize that people would talk if he did so ; and then he observed that it was the duty of Lecomte, who was then waiting upon the prince, to sleep there. Now Lecomte was one of Mme. Sophie's spies, as the old duke had already discovered to his cost. Mme. de Feuchères had originally taken this man into her service on account of his skill as a hairdresser. The duke, who hated to see new faces about him, had for long refused to let Lecomte wait upon him ; however Sophie's determination had at last won the day and Lecomte was installed in his office as under-spy in order to prevent the golden bird escaping from its cage. Lecomte was neither popular in Paris nor at Saint-Leu. To his aged master he was rude and even brutal at times.

So when Manoury suggested that his fellow-servant should watch over his master's safety, the latter cried in haste :

" Oh ! no, no ! we'll say no more about the matter ! "

On August 15th the duke's dentist, M. Hostein, paid him another visit and a strange conversation took place between the two gentlemen *à propos* of the arrest of the prince de Polignac,<sup>1</sup> an event

<sup>1</sup> *Jules, prince de Polignac* (1780-1847) when minister, signed the orders which, in July 1830, led to the downfall of Charles X. He was arrested and condemned to imprisonment for life at Ham, from which prison he, however, eventually escaped.



## Sophie Dawes

which had caused a great deal of stir in political circles.

On M. Hostein saying that, had he been in the prince's place, he should have committed suicide, the duke reproved him thus :

“ How can you say such things ? I would have you know, M. Hostein, that an honourable man never takes his own life ; it is only a coward who could do such a thing. What an example to set to society ! I do not speak to you from a Christian's point of view, although I ought to have done so in the beginning : you know that suicide is the worst of all crimes in the eyes of the Church, and how can we possibly appear in God's presence, if we have not had time to repent of our sins ? ”

And yet life could have had but little charm for the lonely old duke who was never safe from his domestic bully.

Two days later he said to M. Bonnie while the latter was assisting at his toilet :

“ We have only two pieces of good news to learn : first, the arrival of Charles X at his destination (England), and secondly, the certitude that his health has not suffered. When we know these two facts, we can resume our old habits.”

On August 20th Queen Marie-Amélie paid her aged relative her promised visit and pre-

## The Duke Sympathetic

sented him with the badge of the *Légion d'honneur*; after taking leave of the duke, she had a long private interview with Mme. de Feuchères. We can easily imagine that this visit was not calculated to soothe the feelings of the unhappy old duke.

On this same day Manoury, in seeking to reassure the prince, reminded him how esteemed he was and congratulated him upon the fact that he had not left France. The duke seized his valet's arm and pressed it hard, saying at the same time :

“ Why should I feel fears for my own person ? I am old—in my seventy-fifth year and standing on the brink of the grave. But what would become of those who are dependent upon me ” ?

And this was not the only occasion on which he had shown interest in the fate of his servitors. Once when Sophie, seized with a sudden rage for economy, had suggested that she should dismiss some of his servants, he replied :

“ Yes, doubtless I do not require such a large establishment to wait upon me ; but what would become of them and of their wives and children if I were to dismiss them ? ”

Meanwhile the duc de Bourbon had not relinquished his plans for escape. During Sophie's prolonged absence in Paris, he had managed to

## Sophie Dawes

write a number of letters. It must have needed a good deal of manœuvring on his part to do so without awakening Mr. James' suspicions. As he himself took these letters to the post when he was supposed to be out hunting, no one was ever able to ascertain to whom they were addressed ; but it may be supposed that some were intended for the exiled king and some concerned his escape. For he had now determined to escape from Sophie's tyranny or perish in the attempt. He entrusted his diamonds—such of them as Sophie had allowed him to keep—to M. de Surval, and he gave 2000 francs to Manoury who was to go to Paris and purchase a chariot in which his master hoped to make his escape. Manoury, having obtained horses and carriage, was to drive to a village called Moiselles, on the route de Beaumont in the forest of Montmorency, and there to await his master's arrival.

Now, in those days of political unrest, passports were absolutely necessary for any persons anxious to leave France ; they were specially necessary when those persons happened to be of royal birth. Manoury, not knowing to whom to apply in order to obtain the passports for himself and his master, begged M. de Lavillegontier to procure them for him. Mme. de Lavillegontier, as we have already mentioned, was a great

## Another Plan Fails

friend of Mme. de Feuchères ; so when her husband told her of Manoury's extraordinary request, she rushed off to Sophie and declared that the old duke must be trying to escape out of France. And so plan No. 2 fell through.

On the night of August 20th, a horseman rode stealthily up the dark avenue of trees leading to the *château* of Saint-Leu. The faithful Manoury was evidently expecting this visitor whom he took into his master's bedroom before any of the duke's household were aware of his arrival.

To this visitor the duke said :

" M. de Choulot, I have made up my mind. The queen was here to-day and brought me the badge of the *Légion d'honneur*. She and her husband want me to take my place in the *Chambre des pairs* ; but that is impossible. You must help me to escape."

Now M. de Choulot, by a lucky chance, had learnt that very day that a carriage, at Mme. Feuchères' command, had been kept in readiness for several days past at a little village about two miles distant from Saint-Leu ; this carriage, at a given signal, was to start for the coast of Normandy.

This news was a revelation to the unfortunate duke. What did it mean ? And M. de Choulot, who seemed to have acted the part of a private

## Sophie Dawes

detective, was also able to inform the duke that Mme. de Feuchères, that very same day, had paid a visit to her bankers, the famous firm of Rothschild, and had drawn bills upon London amounting to the sum of 500,000 francs (£20,000). And she had also hired an apartment in Paris, in the rue Courty, for what reason was best known to herself—as a hiding-place, probably. This carriage had evidently been ordered by her in case she should find it necessary to *filer à l'anglaise*, as they say in France when they want to intimate that a person has taken French leave. So his little Sophie had been busy too.

M. de Choulot now suggested that someone should be persuaded to personate the duke and start for the French coast in this carriage, thus giving the real man time to get out of the country by some other route. As the duke's old *valet de chambre*, Leclerc, was not altogether unlike his master, they had not far to look for a double. Matters went no farther that evening.

August 25th, the feast of Saint Louis, was made the occasion of a popular *fête* at Saint-Leu where the duke, notwithstanding his soured disposition, was still a favourite with the inhabitants.

The village band came and played many a plaintive air under the windows of the duke's study. On hearing the dear old favourites of

## A Stormy Scene

other and happier days, *La charmante Gabrielle, Il pleut, bergère, Ma Normandie, and Où peut-on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille*, the favourite air of the unfortunate Louis XVI who was more fitted by nature to be a good *bourgeois* than a king, the tears streamed down the old duke's face.

"Ah!" said he to M. Bonnie, "they told me that the villagers hated me; it can't be true; they have deceived me. Ah! what a *fête*, what a *fête*!"

He received the mayor and the municipal authorities of Saint-Leu with the greatest affability.

On the following day, August 26th, at about half-past eight o'clock in the morning, Manoury heard sounds of quarrelling in the duke's bedroom. Mme. de Feuchères had returned to Saint-Leu on the eve of the duke's saint's day, and now for three days she had not been once up to her beloved Paris; it was many a long week since the duke had had the pleasure of her society for so many days at a time. Manoury heard the name of Choulot mentioned several times. Suddenly the door of the duke's bedroom was flung open and Mme. de Feuchères rushed out evidently in one of her usual fits of temper. Manoury went into his master's room and found the duke seated

## Sophie Dawes

on a little sofa close to a window apparently overcome by a nervous attack and calling for eau-de-Cologne. After he had calmed down a little, the duke sent a messenger to M. de Choulot who was then in Paris, begging him to come and see him on the morrow as he had something very important to tell him. Although he seemed rather nervous and depressed during the rest of that day, he managed to get through a good deal of business such as signing several petitions which his secretary brought him to peruse. He invited a visitor, M. de Cossé-Brissac, to stay a few days with him or, if he could not spare time, to stay at least one night. This M. de Cossé-Brissac was unable to do as he had pressing business in Paris; but he consented to stay and dine with the duke. When dinner was announced, M. de Cossé-Brissac was rather astonished to hear his host say :

“ It is time to go to dinner now ; it is all very sad (alluding to the troubles in Paris) ; you must not mention the subject at table on account of the servants.”

The duc de Bourbon seemed to have quite recovered his spirits during dinner. All went well until M. de Cossé-Brissac, forgetful of his host's injunction, mentioned the fact that some clever caricatures of Charles X had lately been

## The Night of the Tragedy

published in Paris. The duke seemed much annoyed by this remark and, leaning across the table, whispered to Mme. de Feuchères :

“ Tell him to be quiet ! ”

Since Sophie's return to Saint-Leu, the duke had resumed his old habit of playing a game of whist before retiring to rest. On this particular evening the party consisted of the duke, Mme. de Feuchères, M. de Lavillegontier and M. de Préjean. The duke was more cheerful than he had been for some time ; he appeared to have forgotten the stormy scene of the morning. He even scolded his partner for making a revoke ; having lost some money, he promised to pay his debts on the morrow. At nine o'clock he accompanied his guest to the hall door where he bade him good night.

It had been arranged that the duke was to go to Chantilly on August 31st and, that all might be in readiness for his arrival, he had told his architect, Dubois, to make the painters and decorators work day and night.

At midnight he rose from the card-table and wished the members of his household good night, accompanying the words with a strange gesture of adieu—at least, so said some of those present.

M. Bonnie, the duke's surgeon, and Lecomte, who was on duty that night, then escorted the



## Sophie Dawes

old gentleman upstairs as was their habit to do. The duke was very silent while he was being undressed and washed ; but as this was nothing unusual, neither of his attendants paid any attention to the fact. When Lecomte was going to carry away his master's clothes in order to brush them, he discovered that there was a paper in the pocket of the duke's nankeen trousers ; he gave it to the prince who got up out of his chair and placed it on the mantelshef. On Lecomte asking him at what hour he wished to be called on the morrow, he answered :

“ At eight o'clock.”

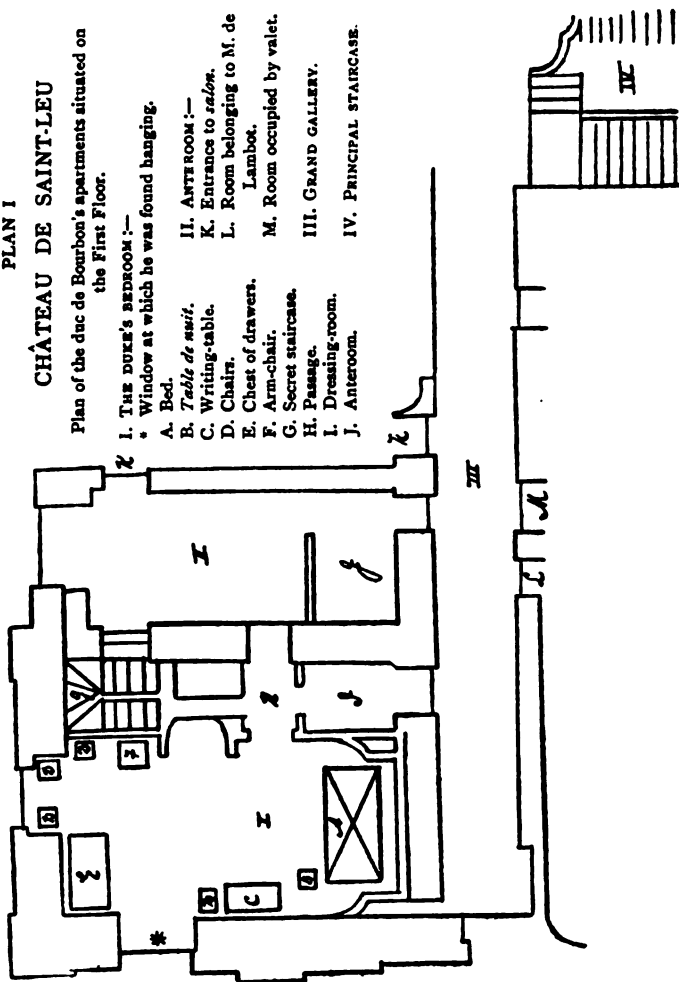
Lecomte then bolted the door of his master's dressing-room—at least, so he said—and went away ; the duke's valets, for some weeks past, had been obliged to go through this little performance every night, owing to the fact that the duke had often forgotten of late to shut himself up in his room—a very unwise proceeding even in a palace.

In order to explain subsequent events, it is now necessary to give a short description of the topography of the *château* of Saint-Leu. The duc de Bourbon's bedroom, which was on the first floor (see Plan I), was situated to the left of a narrow passage leading from his dressing-room. Facing this room was a small door opening

# PLAN I

## CHÂTEAU DE SAINT-LEU

Plan of the duc de Bourbon's apartments situated on the First Floor.



- I. THE DUKE'S BEDROOM :—
  - \* Window at which he was found hanging.
  - A. Bed.
  - B. *Table de nuit*.
  - C. Writing-table.
  - D. Chair.
  - E. Chest of drawers.
  - F. Arm-chair.
  - G. Secret staircase.
  - H. Passage.
  - I. Dressing-room.
  - J. Anteroom.
- II. ANTE ROOM :—
  - K. Entrance to *salon*.
  - L. Room belonging to M. de Lambot.
  - M. Room occupied by valet.
- III. GRAND GALLERY.
- IV. PRINCIPAL STAIRCASE.

## Sophie Dawes

on the secret staircase which led to the *entresol* (see Plan II) and the entrance floor (see Plan III) where Mme. Sophie and her nephew and his wife lodged. This staircase also led to a second corridor which opened on to the chief vestibule of the *château*. The *entresol* was inhabited by the *abbé* Briant, Mme. Sophie's secretary (of whom we have much to say later on), the widow Lachassine, Sophie's lady's maid, and M. and Mme. Dupré who occupied the room situated immediately beneath the duke's bedroom; the floor was so thin that this worthy couple could hear everything that went on in their royal master's room and could even distinguish his words. Everything seemed as quiet and peaceful as usual on the night of August 26th-27th. The gamekeepers, as was their habit to do, went the round of the estate. Mme. de Flassans remained up until two o'clock in the morning writing letters—rather an extraordinary proceeding on her part.

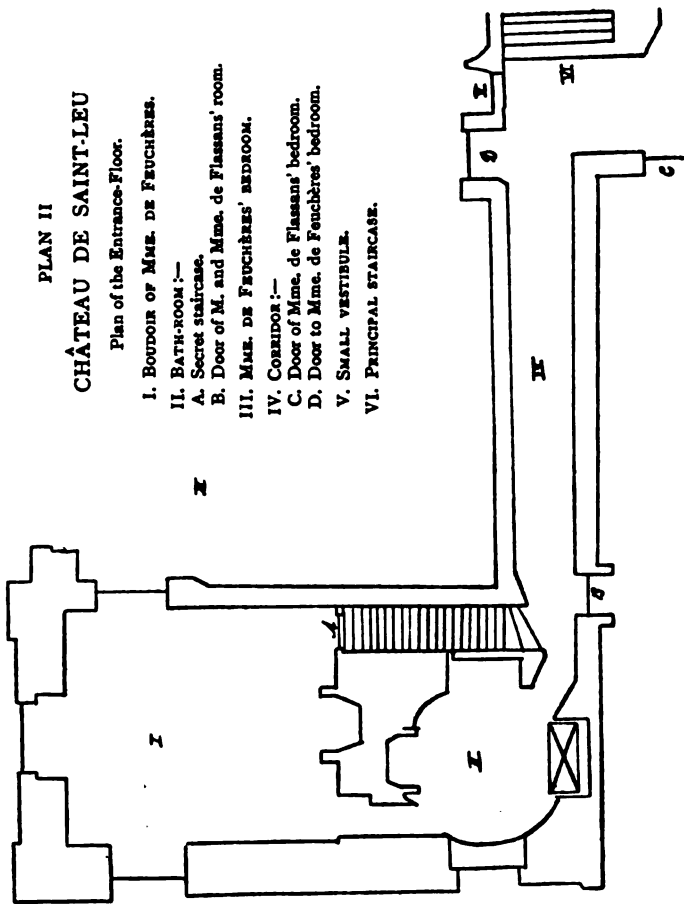
M. and Mme. Dupré who, like James Dawes, the *abbé* Briant, Lecomte, and many another, were paid by Sophie to spy on her unfortunate victim, slept the sleep of the just that night: they were probably worn out by their task which consisted of seeing that *Monseigneur* did not absent himself for an unnecessary length of time from his *château-prison*, once his favourite abode.

PLAN II

CHÂTEAU DE SAINT-LEU

Plan of the Entrance-Floor.

- I. BOUDOIR OF MME. DE FEUCHÈRES.
- II. BATH-ROOM :—  
A. Secret staircase.  
B. Door of M. and Mme. de Flasans' room.
- III. MME. DE FEUCHÈRES' BEDROOM.
- IV. CORRIDOR :—  
C. Door of Mme. de Flasans' bedroom.  
D. Door to Mme. de Feuchères' bedroom.
- V. SMALL VESTIBULE.
- VI. PRINCIPAL STAIRCASE.



## Sophie Dawes

Soon after eight o'clock on the following morning, August 27th, 1830, Lecomte knocked at the duc de Bourbon's bedroom door as he had been bidden to do. On receiving no answer, he tried to turn the door-handle ; the door was bolted inside. He thereupon fetched M. Bonnie and they both knocked in turns. Still no answer. . . . What was to be done ?

First of all they must go and tell Mme. de Feuchères that they could get no reply to their knocking.

When she heard their story, she rushed out of her room, clad in her dressing-gown, without stockings and only wearing slippers, crying at the top of her voice :

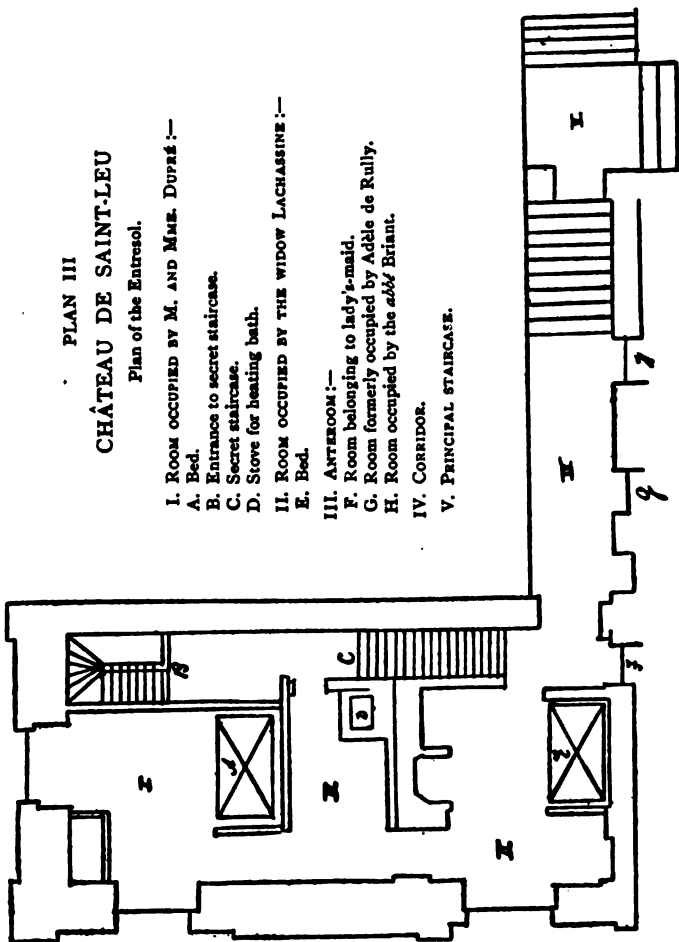
" I will go up at once ; he will reply when he hears *my* voice ! "

But though she called several times : " Open, *Monseigneur*, open, it is I ! " no one came to unbolt the door.

The news that " something had happened " spread like wildfire throughout the palace. Mme. de Feuchères sent for Manoury and ordered him to break open the door of his master's bedroom—a fact which she afterwards denied. Louis Leclerc, the *abbé* Briant and M. Mély-Lafontaine all hurried upstairs. An iron crowbar was produced ; with this implement Manoury smashed

PLAN III  
CHÂTEAU DE SAINT-LEU  
Plan of the Entresol.

- I. Room occupied by M. and Mme. Dupré :—  
A. Bed.  
B. Entrance to secret staircase.  
C. Secret staircase.  
D. Stove for heating bath.
- II. Room occupied by the widow Lachassine :—  
E. Bed.
- III. ANTEROOM :—  
F. Room belonging to lady's-maid.  
G. Room formerly occupied by Adèle de Rully.  
H. Room occupied by the *abbé* Briant.
- IV. CORRIDOR.  
V. PRINCIPAL STAIRCASE.



## Sophie Dawes

the lowest panel of the door and was thus able to creep into his master's room ; M. Bonnie and Lecomte immediately followed his example. . . . The room was dark. The shutters of the windows looking on to the beautiful gardens of Saint-Leu, now gay and redolent with the sweet perfume of roses and box-wood hedges, were closed. A circle of light shone on the ceiling ; this reflection was caused by a wax candle which someone had placed in the grate behind a brass fire-screen in such a manner as to leave the room in darkness.

As their eyes got accustomed to the semi-obscurity, Manoury and his companions saw a half-clothed figure crouching down and apparently listening at one of the shutters of the window looking north.<sup>1</sup> . . .

Notwithstanding the fact that it was a warm day in the month of August, Manoury shuddered for a moment as if an ice-cold hand had touched him.

Then, rushing to the other window, he flung it open and stepped back into the middle of the room.

The warm August sunshine streaming in at the wide-open window revealed a ghastly sight. . . .

The duc de Bourbon, the last of the Condés,

<sup>1</sup> See Plan I, window marked \*.

## Discovery of the Tragedy

was hanging from the *espagnolette*<sup>1</sup> of the long French window.

M. Bonnie, unable to bear the sight of his poor master hanging in this horrible manner, and perhaps thinking that life was not yet extinct, flung himself upon the body and, with his pen-knife, tried to cut a handkerchief which was fastened round the duke's neck and attached by one end to the *espagnolette*. But Manoury, perceiving that all was over, held him back, whispering in an awed voice :

“ No, *monsieur*, it is for Justice to see to this matter ! ”

Terrified at what they had seen, the three men retreated to the door, unbolted it and called for assistance.

In a moment the pale-faced discoverers of the tragedy were surrounded by a group of inquisitive menials who wanted to know what had happened. It was now a quarter to nine o'clock.

At first Mme. de Feuchères expressed a wish to go into the duke's room and view the body, but she was stopped on the threshold and conducted to the dressing-room where she sank down upon a sofa and began to groan. She did not appear astonished when she was informed that he was past human aid ; and though one or two

<sup>1</sup> *Espagnolette*, French window-fastening.



## Sophie Dawes

persons affirmed that they had seen traces of tears on her countenance, others expressed indignation at her callousness.

The servants, with true French excitability, flew along the corridors of the *château* shrieking that *Monseigneur* was dead.

On hearing their cries, the prince's chaplain, the *abbé* Pélier de Lacroix, hurried upstairs to the ante-room ; here a strange scene met his astonished gaze. Mme. de Feuchères was reclining on a sofa listening to M. Bonnie's explanations and condolences and presenting her hand to be kissed by all who entered the room, while M. de Préjean stood leaning against the door apparently much more grieved than his mistress by the duke's sudden demise.

Manoury hurried the chaplain into the duke's bedroom, and pointing to the corpse, said between his sobs :

“ *Viola Monseigneur !* ”

The duc de Bourbon was hanging to the *espagnolette* with his right cheek pressed against the shutter. Two of the duke's own linen handkerchiefs, marked with a B surmounted by a crown, had been used to fasten the body to the handle of the window ; one handkerchief was round his neck and fastened behind in a knot, while the second handkerchief was attached to the *espagno-*

## Suspicious Circumstances

*lette* by one end and knotted to the first handkerchief by the other end ; both handkerchiefs were tied quite loosely, so loosely in fact that it was possible to insert all five fingers between the victim's neck and the improvised halter.

The dead man's head was bent forward on his chest ; the eyes were half closed ; although the face was very pale, it was not discoloured as is the case when death is caused by strangulation ; his mouth was nearly closed, the tongue resting naturally behind the teeth ; the hands were half open, not clenched ; the knees were slightly bent, while the feet were touching the floor.

Now window-fastenings in France are usually only about two and a half feet from the floor ; consequently, supposing it was a case of suicide, if, at the last moment as so often happens, the miserable prince had regretted his act, he need only have placed his feet on the floor in order to relieve all pressure from his neck.

The mayor of Saint-Leu was summoned together with the justice of the peace from Enghien ; the latter functionary ordered the body to be unfastened and placed on the bed ; this task was performed by the duke's valet, Romanzo, who had the greatest difficulty to unfasten the knots, so cleverly were they tied ; one of the knots was what one calls a weaver's knot ; the others were

## Sophie Dawes

so complicated that they could only have been tied by someone who was extremely clever with their fingers.

Were they *sailor's knots*?

On the body being placed upon the bed, which was not disturbed except in the middle where there was a mark as if a hand had been pressed very heavily or as if someone had stood upon the bed in their shoes, it was noticed that the dead man's ankles were much bruised as if they had been trodden upon; both the legs were scratched. An excoriation was discovered low down on the left side of the throat somewhat behind the ear; this mark was too low down to have been caused by the handkerchief which, as we have already said, was quite loose round the duke's neck. A large red bruise, which later turned black, was found between the shoulders. The duke's hunting-watch, which it was ascertained had been wound up as usual on the previous evening by its owner, was lying in its accustomed place on the mantelpiece; two wax candles standing on the same mantelshelf had been lighted and extinguished at the end of half an hour by some unknown hand; a handkerchief was discovered under the bolster with a knot tied in it, a habit which the duke had in order to remind him of something which he had to do on the morrow.

## Significant Facts

Manoury remarked one peculiarity which had escaped his notice during the first minutes of shock and sorrow : it had always been the duke's custom to keep his slippers by the side of the chair on which his clothes were placed : on that fatal morning they were found at the foot of the bed.

Owing to his numerous infirmities, the duke was unable to get out of bed except by turning over on his side ; in fact, he lay so much on one side of the bed, that his servants were obliged to prop up the outside edge with blankets folded double in order to prevent him slipping out during the night. Now, on the morning of the 27th, it was noticed that the blanket was neatly folded down and that the centre of the bed was pressed down while the edges, on the contrary, were very high. And yet another significant fact : the duke's bed, as was the custom in France in those days, stood against the wall in a sort of alcove. When the prince retired to rest on August 26th, the bed was in its proper place, pushed against the wall ; on the morning of August 27th, it was discovered that somebody had pushed the heavy bed one and a half feet away from the alcove. We need only remember that the duke, owing to wounds received in battle and to the fall from his horse in 1823, was practically crippled in his

## Sophie Dawes

left arm, to understand that it was not he who moved the bed away from its proper place during that ghastly night.

Louis-Philippe was informed about half-past eleven o'clock that same morning of the tragedy which had just occurred at Saint-Leu. On learning of the duke's death, the king sent the high chancellor, M. Pasquier, and his own aide-de-camp, M. de Rumigny, to inquire into the circumstances attending this very sudden demise.

M. Pasquier wrote to the king as follows<sup>1</sup> :—

“ SAINT-LEU, *Friday, August 27th,*

“ *4 o'clock at night.*

“ Sire, on arriving at Saint-Leu, I found that the tragic end of Monseigneur le prince de Condé, together with all the horrible details, was known to the whole countryside. I likewise found that the mayor had already drawn up an official statement with the greatest possible care. The examining magistrate and the public prosecutor have arrived and are now engaged in preparing a report. The circumstances attending the duc de Bourbon's demise are too extraordinary not to require a very careful study, and I think it would be a good thing if the king were to send immediately two physicians, such as Drs. Marc and Marjolin,

<sup>1</sup> Neither of the two following letters appeared in the legal proceedings of 1832.

## M. Pasquier's Report

both of whom are accustomed to the investigations necessitated by such tragic events.

"Meanwhile I am going to make out the certificate of death according to the law ; then I shall proceed to affix the seals and I shall have the honour, before the end of the day, to give an account to the king of the result of my investigations.

"I remain Your Majesty's very humble, very obedient servant and subject, "PASQUIER.

"P.S.—It is already said that not a single document has been found, so a search has already been made."

M. Rumigny strikes a deeper note :—

"August 27th, 1830.

"Sire, I think that my presence is indispensable for the time being ; I will not leave the *château* unless the King gives me express orders to do so.

"The official statement has been drawn up by M. Lavillegonthier (*sic*) who has done it as clumsily as possible. No one is suspected so far ; but God knows what we shall learn, for I must say that it does not look to me like a case of suicide.

"It is important that nobody should be accused who is likely to benefit by the will. I shall not leave Saint-Leu until Drs. Marc and Marjolin have acquainted me with the result of their investigations.

"I remain your very devoted servant and subject,

"THEO. DE RUMIGNY."

## Sophie Dawes

In the last letter we notice a sentence which does not strike one as being either in very good taste or quite honourable. M. de Rumigny says :

“ It is important that nobody should be accused who is likely to benefit by the will.”

Now who was to benefit by the will of August 30th, 1829 ? The duc d'Aumale, the son of the reigning king, Louis-Philippe, and Mme. de Feuchères. This fact was known to everybody about court. We take it, from this letter, that the king's aide-de-camp had not heard the rumour that another will had been made.

In M. Pasquier's letter we notice another and even more significant remark. M. Pasquier, like many another scribe, waits to put the most important news in his postscript. He writes :—

“ It is already said that not a single document has been found, so a search has already been made.”

Yes, a search had indeed been made ; every nook, every cranny capable of containing such a valuable document as a will had been searched immediately after the duke's death by Mme. de Feuchères who was aided in her task by the *abbé*

## Sophie Unconcerned

Briant and the baron de Flassans. She accounted for this unseemly behaviour by declaring that she dreaded lest, when the duke's executors came to search for important papers, they should find a will disinheriting the duc d'Aumale and leaving everything to his faithful companion and friend.

When Mme. de Préjean, the wife of one of the officers attached to the duke's household, came to condole with the bereaved *Montespan de Saint-Leu* during the course of the morning, she found that lady *en tête à tête* with the *abbé* Briant, apparently unconcerned and discussing what she ought to do to protect her interests. Another person heard her say :

"It is a very good thing that the prince died in this manner ; if he had died in his bed, they would have said that I had poisoned him !"

*If he had died in his bed . . .* there was nothing to prove that he did not do so.

Strange to say, Mme. de Lavillegontier, on hearing that Lecomte had attended to the duke on the night before the tragedy, cried :

"They have murdered him !"

Immediately after the above-mentioned conversation with the baroness, the *abbé* Briant hurried downstairs in order to find out from M. Dauvert, the duke's butler, exactly how much silver happened to be at Saint-Leu. On the



## Sophie Dawes

butler replying that there was about sixty thousand francs' worth in the pantry, the *abbé* said :

“ Take great care of it, for it goes with the *château* in future ”—and with Sophie Dawes.

When the duke's executors appeared and began to take note of the contents of the *château*, the *abbé* Briant stopped any further investigations with the remark that :

“ All this belongs to Mme. de Feuchères.”

Late that same evening M. Guillaume, the king's secretary, while passing in front of the fire-place in the duke's bedroom, noticed several pieces of paper, both torn and partly burnt, lying among the cinders on the hearth. He bent down and found that someone had evidently been destroying papers, both by burning and by merely tearing them into little pieces. To his surprise, he saw the words : *King—Vincennes—unfortunate son*, on one or two of the fragments. Let us here observe that Manoury, M. Bonnie and Romanzo all swore that there was no paper in the grate when they examined the duke's bedroom after ascertaining the fact that their unfortunate master was past all human aid.

The fragments were carefully gathered up and put in a safe place to await the arrival of the Attorney-General. A fire was then lit for the watchers by the dead prince's body and

## The Burnt Documents

was kept up all night. On the following morning, Romanzo picked up five or six more pieces of paper in the same grate and other fragments were discovered lying in the fire-place in the duke's *salon*.

When M. Bernard, the Attorney-General, arrived about ten o'clock on the morning of the 28th, M. Guillaume informed him of these discoveries and showed him the fragments of paper. M. Guillaume was more than astonished when, some days later, the duke's valet, Lecomte, swore by all the saints in the calendar that it was he and he alone who had found the torn and burnt fragments of paper in the two fire-places.

On seeing these fragments, M. Bernard immediately exclaimed :

“ We shall find the truth here ! ”

With the help of several persons then present, the shreds of paper were pieced together sufficiently well for the following words to be read :—

“ Saint-Leu belongs to the king  
Philippe  
neither pillaged nor burned  
the *château* nor the village  
hurt nobody  
neither my friends nor my  
servants. You have been misled

## Sophie Dawes

as to my intentions. I have not

ie in wishing  
heart the people  
and the hope of  
happiness of my country

“ Saint-Leu and the estate  
belong to your king  
Philippe : neither pillaged nor burned  
the the village  
not hurt nobody  
neither y friends, nor my servants.  
You have been misled as to my intentions ; I  
have only to die, wishing happiness and prosperity  
to the French nation and my country.

“ Farewell for ever.

“ L. H. J. DE BOURBON,  
“ prince de Condé.

“ P.S.—I ask to be buried at Vincennes, close  
to my unfortunate son.”

What was the meaning of this document, or rather documents—for, from the repetition of the words written on these fragments, it would seem as if they had originally belonged to two rough copies of some manifesto or official document ? Who wrote them ? Who put these fragments into the two fire-places ? How was it that neither Manoury, nor M. de Choulot, nor Romanzo, nor M. Bonnie, nor any of the inquisitive persons who crowded into the duc

## Some Important Questions

de Bourbon's bedroom and *salon* after the discovery of the tragedy never noticed these pieces of white, torn and partly burnt paper lying among the dark cinders on the hearth? How was it that the fire, which was lighted in the duke's bedroom on the night of the 27th, did not consume all the fragments?

Some declared that these fragments were all that remained of the manifesto mentioned by M. Hostein as having been written by the duke during the revolutionary days of July, in the hope that, if he affixed this document to the gates of his beloved *château* of Saint-Leu, the populace would respect his property.

It was strange that in this document, the duke seemed to imply that he wished Saint-Leu and its estates to belong to the king, Louis-Philippe, when he knew that he had already willed that property to Mme. de Feuchères.

The Attorney-General then summoned Lecomte and ordered him to say all he knew concerning the duke's movements on the night of the 26th-27th. When questioned by Manoury as to whether he had ascertained if the door of the secret staircase had been bolted on the fatal night, he hesitated for a minute and then said "he had not remarked whether it was bolted or not."

M. Bonnie then contradicted Lecomte and

## Sophie Dawes

swore that both he and Mme. de Feuchères knew that it was not bolted, and that the latter, in order to conceal this fact, had gone up to the duke's bedroom by the principal staircase when she was called to come and see what had happened on the morning of the 27th.

Lecomte then feigned to be unaware of the fact that this secret staircase communicated with Mme. de Feuchères' private apartment.

A post-mortem examination was made of the duke's body by the king's own physicians, MM. Marc and Marjolin, in the presence of M Pasquier : the result was a verdict of suicide. While the examination was taking place, M. de Surval, the faithful Manoury and the duke's own doctors, MM. Dubois and Gendrin, were requested to leave the room. The two latter physicians drew up two statements in which they both declared that their master had not died a natural death. Dr. Dubois gives his version of the tragedy in the following words :

“The prince was probably asleep in his bed ; the murderers must have been let into his bedroom, I do not wish to inquire how or by whom ; they then flung themselves upon him, seized him firmly and were easily able to hold him down in his bed ; then the most desperate and the most dexterous of the murderers immediately

## How the News was Received

suffocated him as he lay helpless on his bed pinned down by the other villains ; finally, in order to make people think that he had committed suicide and to prevent any judicial researches which might lead to the discovery of the assassins' identity, they fastened a neckerchief round their victim's neck and hung him up to the *espagnolette* of the window."

The body of the last of the Condés was placed in a *chapelle ardente* with all the pomp and display of wax candles and beautiful flowers which always accompany the lying-in-state of any person of importance in the fair land of France.

Lecomte was affected in the most extraordinary manner when he, together with his fellow-servants and all the villagers from miles round Saint-Leu, went to view his master lying in state. He was heard to exclaim :

" I have something heavy on my mind ! "

The news of the death of Louis Henri Joseph, duc de Bourbon and prince de Condé, was received with astonishment by all classes alike. It was known that the prince suffered from several minor ailments attendant upon old age, but none of them were of a nature to cause such a sudden demise. Jacques Bonhomme, who ever since '93 has refused to be gagged, openly declared that the old gentleman had been murdered.

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The press—probably the same press which, by the cleverly planned campaign of November, 1828, in favour of the duc de Nemours, helped not a little to influence the duc de Bourbon to make the will in favour of the duc d'Aumale—said that it was clearly a case of suicide by strangulation. It was from this same source that the duke's nearest relative on his mother's side, Louis, prince de Rohan, learnt the tragedy and that he had been disinherited—a fact of which he had been aware since 1829 but which had not prevented him making constant visits to Chantilly in order to inquire after the duke's health ; so frequent had these visits been that, as we have already seen, they had awakened suspicions in the breast of the duc d'Orléans as to their real object.

Mme. la baronne de Feuchères declared from the very first that it was a case of suicide ; she then made a statement to the effect that the duc de Bourbon had already made one attempt to get rid of himself, namely on August 11th, but that he had failed to carry out his project ; she added that he had often told her that he could quite understand people wanting to commit suicide and that he himself had planned to do so when he was in la Vendée during the *Cent Jours*. She displayed considerable uneasiness when people

## Was it Suicide ?

remarked that it was strange that the duke had left no letter of farewell. And then she declared that he was mad at the time of committing the deed, for surely if he had been in his right mind he would have written " a few lines of affectionate adieux to the woman who had loved him so dearly ? "

His servants also seem to have thought that he ought to have left some message of gratitude for their faithful services : he was not likely to do that, considering that Manoury was the only servant he had ever dared to trust.

As for James Dawes, he was sure of his salary for the term of his natural life and he did not even trouble to feign surprise—regret was out of the question.

The *abbé* Briant, who was always ready to follow Sophie's cue in everything concerning the duc de Bourbon, was remarkably certain of the fact that he had taken his own life ; he accounted for this certainty by pointing out that the unhappy prince had lately been very weak in the head and that he must have had a tendency towards suicide all his life ; he ended up by declaring that it was his opinion that the duke had hung himself in a fit of delirium. He swore that he had once seen the duke measuring the height of the same *espagnolette* with his



## Sophie Dawes

walking-stick with the intention of hanging himself, whereas the real facts of the case were that the old duke was trying to arrange the curtain which had got caught in the window.

Let us now hear the dead man's opinion of suicide—an opinion which he expressed not once, but many times, during the last years of his troubled existence. He called suicide an act of cowardice, as we have already read during his conversation with M. Hostein concerning the arrest of the prince de Polignac.

M. Bonnie heard him say on another occasion :

“ Life is not ours to do what we like with it. We cannot bid farewell to life without the permission of Him who gave it.”

His servant Manoury declared that the idea of suicide was particularly repugnant to him : he had a perfect horror of it. One day, when several members of his household were discussing the case of a general who had blown out his own brains, one of their number imprudently praised the man for his bravery.

“ Bravery ? ” retorted the prince, “ you mean cowardice. Our life does not belong to us ; we cannot do what we like with it. No matter what our circumstances in life may be, it is our duty to bear adversity with courage and fortitude.”

## Absurdity of the Suicide Theory

It would seem as if the duke had possessed a certain amount of religious feeling, although it manifested itself more in words than in deeds.

We cannot say as much for Sophie Dawes, for when M. de Choulot was said to have been miraculously cured of a very severe illness, she wrote a letter to her duke in which she ridiculed the erstwhile invalid for thinking that a visit to a damp cave and half a dozen *Ave Marias* offered up to a plaster image could cure anyone of any illness whatsoever. Had the duke wished to take his own life, he could have done so with much less trouble to himself—and others, for his gun and his hunting-knife were always kept in his bedroom at Saint-Leu.

The version of suicide by hanging is absolutely absurd from a medical point of view ; a man who could not even fasten his own shoe-strings would have been quite incapable of tying himself up to the *espagnolette* of the French window. It is true that he was able to tie his own neckerchief, but only after his valet had placed it round his neck for him and arranged the two ends under his chin ready to be tied. When going upstairs, he had to lean on his walking-stick with one hand while he helped himself up by the banister with his other hand. He could not even take off his hat with his left hand. One

## Sophie Dawes

of his servants went so far as to affirm that he had often seen the aged duke obliged to bend his head down to the level of his glass when he wished to drink.

M. Bonnie at first seemed to think with Mme. de Feuchères that the duke had done away with himself. His statement of what he noticed when he first entered the duke's bedroom on the morning of the 27th was decidedly misleading, for, after having expressed an opinion that the duke might have used a certain chair to fasten himself up to the *espagnolette*, he contradicted himself later on by affirming that he had struck this chair with his foot on entering the bedroom and that consequently the chair in question was too far away from the corpse to have been used for that purpose. When M. Méry-Lafontaine, in a frenzy of noble self-sacrifice, burning to unravel the mystery, offered to hang himself up to the *espagnolette* with the very same handkerchief, no one rushed forward to prevent him committing this rash deed—it was too clear to everyone present that the experiment was attended with no danger to his person.

So much for the theory of suicide. . . .

Those who declared that the duke had been murdered were informed that, as the door was bolted inside, all suspicions of a crime having

## Sophie's Affirmation

been committed must be dismissed as absurd and improbable. However when careful investigation revealed the fact that this same bolt could be pushed back with the aid of a piece of horse-hair or narrow tape by anyone standing outside, several persons who had ridiculed the theory of a crime began to think that they had been too precipitate.

When someone mentioned that the duc de Bourbon's accident of the 11th had never been satisfactorily explained, Mme. de Feuchères hastened to affirm that she had not been at Saint-Leu on the date of the accident in question, but in Paris, her city of refuge when the tediousness of a life in the country passed in the company of an inveterate sportsman became too unbearable. To prove her absence she said :

"Everybody at the *château* (including M. de Lavillegontier who himself apprised me in Paris of the prince's accident) knows that I was not there at that time. . . . I demand that the matter be inquired into. . . . I cannot be sure of the date ; I do not know whether it was the 11th or the 12th ; but I swear by all that is most holy and most sacred that I was in Paris when M. de Flassans informed me of this accident and told me not to be anxious ; that it had disfigured *Monseigneur* for a time but that it would be

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nothing. I remember perfectly well that Mme. de Flassans gave me full particulars of the accident ; she told me that *Monseigneur* came down to breakfast later than usual ; that on entering the dining-room, he turned to the ladies of his household and said :

“ ‘ *Mesdames*, I am very ugly to-day ; I have struck my head against my *table de nuit*. . . .’ I repeat that I was not at Saint-Leu that day.”

As we have already seen, she was in both places ; for she left the *château* de Saint-Leu four hours after the discovery of the “ accident,” and she reached Paris about two o’clock in the afternoon.

We will now return to Mme. de Gontaut who, as usual, has something to say concerning all important happenings in the royal circle. She says :—

“ We were at Lulworth when we heard of the fearful catastrophe of the death of Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon. I then remembered the details which I think I have already mentioned concerning Saint-Leu : the donkey expedition which M. Hennequin joined, the morning passed together at Saint-Leu and several remarks about the room occupied by the prince.

“ Since that time I have learnt most interesting details, details which I will now impart to my



*Constant Bourgeois del.*

THE CHÂTEAU OF ST. LEU

*Stamper sculp.*



## Interesting Details

readers. I will ask the latter to allow me to pass over several years when, having returned to France, I met by chance M. Hennequin at a *soirée* given by the dowager duchesse de Saint-James. He recollected our meeting and informed me that immediately after the death of Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon, he was sent to Saint-Leu by the princes de Rohan who were the duke's heirs on his mother's side. He arrived at the same time as the persons commissioned by M. de Sémonville to make investigations with a view to ascertaining the causes of the prince's death. Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon had been placed upon his bed which was marked as if someone had stood upon it without taking the trouble to take off their shoes.

"The persons sent by M. de Sémonville noticed on the door of the secret staircase a round brass bolt which could be fastened not only from inside the room, but could also be unfastened and refastened from the outside with the aid of a piece of horsehair. This very extraordinary fact must have made them think. Was not the bolt fastened in order to avert suspicion ?

" 'On entering this room,' continued M. Hennequin, 'my first impulse was to rush towards the alcove, where I found the secret staircase just as I had seen it a short time before the tragedy.'

" 'You remember,' added he, 'that isolated room, where a crime could so easily be committed, the low window which, by its very lowness, would



## Sophie Dawes

make suicide impossible, the suicide with which certain persons have tried to sully the memory of the last of the Condés ? The surgeon, who was summoned at the same time as myself, had already ascertained that, according to the position of the victim's feet which were touching the ground, strangulation was impossible.'

"This was M. Hennequin's story. Others have already spoken of this terrible and mysterious catastrophe ; it would be unseemly for me to express any opinion upon the subject.

"I only wish to repeat the story which was told to me at that time. . . ."

One thing was certain and that was that the duc de Bourbon had, for the last few months of his life, endured much mental anguish.

Popular opinion, meanwhile, had been saying some very unkind things of Sophie and her family. She was uneasy in her mind ; perhaps she was beginning to think that she had been a little too grasping. She dreaded lest Manoury, by his indiscretion, should let out the fact that his master had been anxious to escape from Saint-Leu at all costs.

One day she overheard Manoury talking to his fellow-servants about his unhappy master's attempts to put a frontier between himself and the tenacious Montespan of Saint-Leu.

"Take care !" said Sophie, "the king might

## The Duke's Will

make it uncomfortable for you if anyone were to hear you say that ! ”

On finding that Manoury was not to be bullied into silence, she tried to buy his favour by promising to give him a place in her own household. But Manoury was not to be bought.

The reading of the duc de Bourbon's will caused a perfect explosion of indignation. How wrong, how unjust to leave his millions to the duc d'Aumale who, as the king's son, was already well provided for, and to the Englishwoman !

Three of the clauses in his will were disregarded : his wish to be buried at Vincennes close to the remains of the beloved duc d'Enghien was slighted ; the *château* of Ecoeu which he had intended as a refuge, a home for the descendants of the soldiers who had fought under his father and again in la Vendée, was never used for the purpose—probably because the king, and later the duc d'Aumale, did not wish to be obliged to take from their own pockets the money necessary for the upkeep of such a huge establishment ; Manoury, M. Bonnie and one or two other faithful servitors, were never rewarded for their services as he had expressly desired that they should be. The two most important bequests were carried out with the greatest exactitude.

On September 4th, the duke's heart was

## Sophie Dawes

solemnly conveyed to Chantilly where the *abbé* Pélier, the duke's chaplain, said a mass for the repose of the dead man's soul. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the *abbé* raised the silver-gilt vase containing the heart of the last of the Condés and, amid an impressive silence, uttered these solemn and significant words :

“ I swear upon my faith as a Catholic priest that the prince is innocent before God of his own death ! ”

The funeral took place at Saint-Denis that same day ; many princes of the blood followed the remains of the father who had begged so piteously to be buried close to the body of his only son. Again the *abbé* Pélier, during the course of the funeral oration, uttered the solemn words :

“ No ! the prince did *not* take his own life ! ”

The coffin was placed in the vault where it now rests together with many another scion of royal blood.

It was very doubtful whether anyone really regretted the duke's demise. *Les absents ont toujours tort*, and the duc de Bourbon had done but little to make people remember him with affection. Louis-Philippe, who had worked in his son's interests, and Mme. de Feuchères, who had worked in her own and not because she took an interest in the child of a person whom she knew

## A Paltry Monument

despised her from the bottom of his heart, probably thought they had a right to their victim's fortune. To whom should he have left his millions if not to his affectionate family and to the companion of many years' standing ?

A M. Edouard Walsh opened a subscription in a lady's newspaper, *La Mode*, in order to erect a monument to the memory of the father of the duc d'Enghien ; however the last of the Condés cannot have been a great favourite with the subscribers to that journal, for the fund only produced just enough to pay for a wooden cross which was erected at Saint-Leu.

Mme. de Feuchères left Saint-Leu immediately after the funeral—at which she did not assist, strange to say : she would have made a touching picture clad in her deep mourning, supported by Louis-Philippe and the little eight-year-old duc d'Aumale, with the baron de Flassans and the marquis de Chabannes following at a respectful distance. No, she went up to her beloved Paris where she took up her abode in her pavilion in the Palais-Bourbon. Her carriage was frequently to be seen waiting outside the Palais-Royal, where Louis-Philippe was still residing, while she paid her respects to her sovereign and Marie-Amélie.

Sophie seems to have been afflicted about this time with the modern malady of " nerves "—or

## Sophie Dawes

“ the vapours ” as they were called in those days—for we read that she was so uneasy at night that she made her nephew’s wife, Mme. de Flassans, sleep in her room while the *abbé* Briant, her *preux chevalier, sans peur et sans reproche*, slept fully armed in the library adjoining her bedroom.

Of what were these worthy persons afraid ?

The *abbé* explained his nervousness by remarking that “ Paris was in a very unsettled condition and that dishonest people had lately broken down and carried away some iron railings at the end of the garden of the Palais-Bourbon.”

Now, as Sophie’s pavilion was situated in quite another part of the palace, the good *abbé*’s precautions against a sudden attack seem to have been rather uncalled for.

Sophie herself gave another and a totally different version : she ascribed her condition to “ recent events and to the fearful shock which she had lately sustained.”

However she soon recovered her good spirits—her health had never suffered, for Sophie was one of those lucky creatures who do not know what ill-health means. She then recommenced her little speculations on the Stock Exchange ; Sophie, as we know, had latterly spent a good deal of time in Paris, and that time had not been wasted, for, at the end of a few months, she found herself

## A Strange Discovery

possessed of quite a considerable sum of money. She therefore continued to speculate whenever she thought she could do so with advantage.

It seems strange that, having already been so peculiarly favoured by fortune, she should risk some of her booty in trying to increase it. After so many years of keen anxiety, perhaps she felt the need of some absorbing occupation not altogether unattended with risk and excitement. A quiet life to such a woman as Sophie Dawes must have appeared absolutely unbearable.

Shortly after the duke's death, Mme. de Feuchères presented his godson, Obry, with a casket as a little remembrance of his royal godfather. Now the baroness was quite unaware that this casket had a false bottom ; however Obry soon discovered this fact. He then tapped the box on all sides and, with a measure, took the height of the lid from the bottom inside and out. These experiments revealed the existence of a movable tray or drawer which was concealed at the bottom of the casket. In this tray were several gold pieces, a letter from M. Dupin, the erstwhile duc d'Orléans' man of business, and the scheme for the adoption of the little duc d'Aumale by the duc de Bourbon. And this was not all : there was a bundle of letters which, had the duke intended to take his own life, he would have been the first to

## Sophie Dawes

destroy for the honour of his family and for his own sake. Perhaps these letters concerned the secret which we mentioned as having been imparted by the duke to Sir William Gordon and to the duc de La Châtre during his sojourn in England, and later to his valet Manoury during the illness occasioned by the fall from his horse in 1823.

## CHAPTER VII

Mme. de Feuchères returns to Paris—Legal proceedings—  
Sophie retires into obscurity—Last illness and death of  
Sophie Dawes, baronne de Feuchères.

**T**HE storm which had been rumbling about on the horizon for some time, now broke over the heads of Mme. de Feuchères and her faithful allies. The princes de Rohan announced their intention to take legal proceedings against her on the plea that she had influenced the duc de Bourbon to disinherit them. When the public heard that the case would in all probability be tried before a criminal court, no surprise was expressed. Few of the inhabitants of Saint-Leu and Chantilly believed that the duke had committed suicide. The duke's retainers in the latter palace went the length of asserting :

“ Had he remained at Chantilly, we should still have him with us.”

“ A certain august personage,” says Louis Blanc in his *Histoire de Dix Ans*, “ was named in connection with Mme. de Feuchères ; the populace



## Sophie Dawes

eagerly snatched at the hint. Many anti-royalist periodicals laid great stress upon the fact that the royal family, immediately after August 27th, had shown remarkable alacrity in taking possession of the scene of the tragedy ; that, although the duke's private chaplain was on the spot, he was not invited to help the mayor of Saint-Leu draw up his official statement ; and that the duke's own physician, M. Gendrin, was not allowed to assist at the post-mortem examination whereas to MM. Marc and Pasquier, physicians-in-ordinary to Louis-Philippe, was intrusted the painful and delicate task of ascertaining the cause of the death of the last of the Bourbons."

M. de Broglie was hauled over the coals by the same newspapers for having forbidden the *Moniteur* to reproduce the *abbé* Pélier's funeral oration at Chantilly and later at Saint-Denis.

A few days after the funeral, a small volume containing the result of the post-mortem examination was published by Dr. Marc. It was entitled : *Examen médico-légal des causes de la mort de S.A.R. le prince de Condé*, and the name of Louis-Philippe figured on the title-page as having authorized its publication.

Mme. de Feuchères bought several copies of this work and distributed them to such of the late duke's servants who were likely to be called to give evidence concerning the last months of his life.



*Photo Neurdein*

LOUIS-PHILIPPE AND HIS FIVE SONS  
*From the picture by E. J. H. Vernet, in the Musée Condé, Chantilly*



## Invitation to the Court

The "august personage" mentioned by M. Louis Blanc could be no other than Louis-Philippe, the *bourgeois* king, who used to boast that he could walk arm-in-arm with Marie Amélie all over Paris unattended and unarmed except for the gingham umbrella without which he never appeared in public. It gave him infinite pleasure to point to Marie-Amélie and to his bevy of handsome sons and say that he had set France a good example.

And yet his conduct as duc d'Orléans, when he first received Mme. de Feuchères' overtures, was more than peculiar.

But the star of the d'Orléans was now at its apogee; the last beam of the glorious Condé aureola had flickered and faded away amid disrepute and "the terror that flies by night."

Even those who firmly believed in the theory of a suicide were shocked when they learnt that the baronne de Feuchères had received an invitation to appear at the court of Louis-Philippe and Marie-Amélie and that she had been accorded a warm welcome—almost before the poor old duc de Bourbon's body had had time to grow cold!

In short, so many doubts were expressed concerning the circumstances attending the duke's death that, notwithstanding the fact that every effort had been made in a certain quarter to squash the affair, in the month of September,

## Sophie Dawes

1830, an inquiry was ordered to take place. Popular opinion was so thoroughly against Mme. de Feuchères that, without express injunctions from Louis-Philippe, she would have been arrested.

Now M. de la Hurproie, to whom the task of inquiring into the truth of the matter had been intrusted, happened to be a very honest man with a keen sense of duty ; for five months he worked day and night trying to sift the truth from the huge mass of biassed and unbiassed evidence. In a rash moment, he swore that he would clear up the mystery, no matter who had to suffer. Whereupon the king sent M. Persil, the Attorney-General, to pay him a visit one evening ; during the course of the conversation, M. Persil informed M. de la Hurproie that he need not take the trouble to forward the report of the result of his investigations as it could not be received for political reasons. Soon after this nocturnal visit, M. de la Hurproie was told that it was time for him to retire into private life.

For his share in this transaction, M. Persil was first made minister, then director of the Mint and finally *pair de France*. It cannot be denied that Louis-Philippe rewarded some of his servitors handsomely.

And so the inquiry passed into other and less scrupulously clean hands.

## Important Revelations

But royal protection was powerless to shield Sophie from the all-powerful press. In the beginning of October, 1830, the *Figaro*, which was then edited by M. Nestor Roqueplan, was guilty of a very cruel pun which appeared under the heading of *Odds and Ends*. It said :—

*“ Mme. de Feuchères est une petite baronne anglaise qui ressemble beaucoup à une espagnolette ”*  
—alluding to the *espagnolette* to which the unfortunate duke's body had been found hanging.

Although Louis-Philippe prided himself upon the fact that no one was too poor or too humble to be received at the Tuileries, he refused to grant an audience to the duc de Bourbon's chaplain, the *abbé* Pélier de Lacroix, when that worthy ecclesiastic wrote to him informing him that he had some very important revelations to make concerning “ the horrible assassination which had been committed upon the person of his unfortunate relative.”

Now the lawyers interested in the case had already refused to listen to the aforesaid revelations, as they had refused to hear one or two other witnesses who, by their knowledge of the late duke's sufferings, were likely to place the baronne de Feuchères in an awkward position. As the *abbé's* letter is not without interest, we will reproduce it here :—

## Sophie Dawes

“ PARIS, *October 10th*, 1830.

“ Sire, Having waited in vain to be questioned concerning the death of his Royal Highness, Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon, to whom I had the honour to act as chaplain, and seeing that no proper investigations have been made on this most important matter, I come to beg Your Majesty kindly to listen to me for a moment. I shall do myself the honour to place my written declaration in your hands. I consider it of far too great importance merely to include it in the history which I am now writing ; besides I have every cause to realize that it is my duty to address myself to the King himself, to whose interest it is, I imagine, that we should obtain proofs of the horrible assassination committed upon the person of his unfortunate relative. Surely the task of avenging his memory, of restoring honour to the last of the Condés, should not be held unworthy of his family. I remain, etc.,

“ *Abbé PÉLIER DE LACROIX.*”

The only reply which the *abbé* received to this communication was contained in a few lines written by the king's secretary to the effect that, if he really had any revelations to make, he had better apply to the Keeper of the Seals. The good *abbé*, being familiar with the labyrinth of morals and customs in court and legal circles, foresaw that he would probably gain nothing

## A Supposed Second Will

by writing to that functionary and so he waited. A few weeks later, he published a pamphlet in which he affirmed that the duc de Bourbon, shortly before his death, had made another will annulling that of August 30th, 1829, and leaving his entire fortune to Henri de France, *l'Enfant du Miracle*, the comte de Chambord, and to this child's sister, *Mademoiselle*. He also asserted that Mme. la baronne de Feuchères had stolen this new will (in which her name was not mentioned) and was holding it in readiness lest Louis-Philippe should attempt to abandon her to justice.

We have already heard rumours of the making of another will. It was quite probable that, supposing the second will was really made, the duc de Bourbon asked his chaplain to witness the document as being a safe person to trust and not likely to blab of the matter to his task-mistress.

And other persons—persons connected with the court, strange to say—had got hold of the same story; which they amplified by adding that Mme. Sophie had made up her mind to get rid of the testator so that she might obtain possession of the will and destroy it before any would-be heirs could discover its existence. The same newsmongers even went so far as to declare



## Sophie Dawes

that Mme. de Feuchères had threatened to produce the will in court if the king did not squash the case. By so doing, both she and her accomplice would have lost the booty for which they had fought hand-in-hand for so many years ; but Sophie would have got her revenge by this action—and to women of her type, revenge is very sweet.

Certainly the search for papers mentioned in M. Pasquier's letter to Louis-Philippe which took place immediately after the discovery of the tragedy would lead us to suppose that Mme. Sophie had somehow got wind of the existence of such a document. Of one thing we may be quite certain and that is that it did not share the fate of the documents which were found torn and burnt in the two fire-places on August 27th and 28th.

And now another rumour came to swell the long list of *on dit* concerning this scandal. It was whispered that Mme. de Feuchères held the trump card in her hand in the shape of a letter from Louis-Philippe in which that gentleman told her to prevent the duc de Bourbon's departure *at all costs* : which instructions she interpreted in a most fatal and effective manner.

Matters dragged on for several months. If Justice is blind in France, it cannot be denied that she is also halt. It was not until June,

## Legal Proceedings

1831, that the case was concluded. Mme. de Feuchères had two very astute legal men to defend her interests ; one of these was the celebrated M. Odilon-Barrot, with whom she seems to have been on very friendly terms.

During the inquiry, Maître Lavaux, who appeared for the baronne de Feuchères, actually had the impudence to assert that his client's relations with the last of the Condés had never been anything but purely platonic :

" Friendship," cried he, " the purest friendship, friendship alone ruled over their long life of companionship."

It is not surprising to learn that this eloquent tirade was received with roars of ironical laughter.

It may be as well to remark here that Sophie Dawes was not a victim to national spite : the fact that she emerged triumphant from two legal ordeals, that of 1830-31 and 1831-32, prove that she was given the benefit of many doubts. Those who are familiar with both nations, however, must be aware that an *entente cordiale* never can exist and never has existed except on paper.

When Lecomte was cross-examined as to the meaning of the words : " I have something heavy on my mind," uttered by him in the presence of his fellow-servants when they went to see their

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late master lying in state in the room of the tragedy now transformed into a *chapelle ardente*, he declared that he had been thinking of his shares in a hairdressing establishment and he had been fearful lest the baroness should not keep her promises to help him in the future. It was a strange moment to choose in which to think of such things.

Lecomte made other and even more extraordinary statements during the cross-examination: he swore that he had only seen Mme. de Feuchères on one occasion when she had not spoken to him but had sent promises of assistance through a third person. Now as Lecomte had been in the duke's service for eighteen months and as it was Mme. de Feuchères who engaged him on account of his skill as a hairdresser, the above assertions are truly absurd. It is incredible that he could have been all those months at Saint-Leu and have only seen Mme. de Feuchères once.

When it transpired that the room situated immediately below the duc de Bourbon's bedroom had formerly belonged to Manoury but that Mme. Sophie had turned him out of it in order to install the Dupré family there, people said that she had done a very unwise thing.

As my readers may remember, this worthy

## Sophie's Denials

couple swore that they heard no noises in the duke's bedroom during the night of the tragedy, and this notwithstanding the fact that anyone sleeping in the room below could hear the slightest movements of the person lying in the bed overhead. Even the Duprés had to allow that they could hear the clock ticking in the Duke's bedroom. At first Mme. Sophie denied that she had given Manoury's room to her own servants ; she denied this fact as she denied everything which could be used as a weapon against her or do harm to her cause by influencing people against her. However when it was proved that she had really done so, she ate her words and said that if she had acted thus, it was because she wanted someone in whom she could trust to be always at hand.

The witness Fife caused some sensation by declaring that he had a very poor opinion of M. and Mme. Dupré's respectability.

Although this worthy pair were eminently discreet, it cannot be said that their little boy had inherited his parents' good qualities, for he nearly spoiled the game by his foolish prattle.

A M. Payel stated that the young Dupré, while playing with his little girl, had told her that "papa and mamma had got a lot of money, that he had seen them count it out one night

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when they thought he was fast asleep, and that they were going to buy a place in the country."

On being called to account for this statement, M. Dupré swore that the child had merely had a very vivid dream and that he himself knew nothing about any money and that he was a poor maligned creature. On being cross-examined, however, he let out a fact which surprised his hearers : he confessed that " someone had lately left him a little legacy."

The young Dupré was then summoned to give evidence, which he did with such parrot-like exactitude, that the magistrate remarked :

" You seem to have been well coached."

Several other witnesses then came forward to swear that they had heard Dupré say, on the occasion of a dispute between him and Mme. de Feuchères :

" Damn her ! it's lucky for her that I kept my mouth shut and didn't let out all I knew ! "

On being questioned as to this speech which almost amounted to a threat, Dupré said that he had alluded to the fact that he had discovered the existence of an intrigue between Mme. de Feuchères and a member of the duke's household.

Mme. Dupré, with true feminine inconsistency, gave quite a different explanation of her lord

## The Case Dismissed

and master's extraordinary speech and said that he had alluded to the conduct of Leblond, the duke's butler, who had some private spite against her husband.

Another fact transpired : Mme. de Feuchères had told M. and Mme. Dupré that they had better leave her service for a while after the tragedy in order to avert suspicion—which they did for a few weeks and then returned to resume their duties.

The *abbé* Briant's evidence was solely in favour of Mme. de Feuchères. This man had not been a *persona grata* with the duc de Bourbon who had even gone the length of saying that he could not bear the sight of him. The *abbé* had made himself useful to Sophie in more ways than one : he had completed her education, had taught her the ways of good society ; he was her secretary and her *cicisbeo*.

At last on June 30th, 1831, the magistrates, having agreed that there were no grounds for prosecution, the case was dismissed ; ten months had elapsed since the tragedy. Immediately after the conclusion of the legal proceedings, the king's librarian wrote a pamphlet entitled, *Histoire complète et impartiale du procès relatif à la mort et au testament du duc de Bourbon*. As may have been expected, the author of this

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work declared that the duke had committed suicide. Although published at the low price of 2 francs 50 cts., the book does not seem to have had much success ; M. Alexandre de Lassalle tells us that, soon after its publication, peddlers were to be seen on the quays and boulevards offering it for sale at five *sous*.

It is a remarkable fact that those persons who had been loudest in declaring that the duke had taken his own life received honours and advancement ; we have already seen how M. Persil was rewarded for his share in calming the *abbé Pélrier de Lacroix's* anxiety to tell all he knew concerning the tragedy. M. Bernard, the Attorney-General, was made a member of the *Cour de cassation* and several other functionaries received equally valuable posts and awards. But though Sophie Dawes had apparently come through her ordeal with flying colours, there were still some people who were unkind enough to say that, "although she had won her case in court, she had lost it in the opinion of the public."

Many caricatures appeared about this time. In No. XXI of the *Journal de la Librairie* for 1831 we find that a particularly cutting caricature by Levilly was published in Paris by Villain in that year. It was entitled, *Le bandagiste*

## French Caricatures

*henriquiniste*, an allusion to one of the unfortunate duc de Bourbon's numerous infirmities. The inscription read as follows : " Vaincre ou mourir. Corbleu ! Madame Galerius, j'ai trop long-tems *suspendu* ma vengeance ; je ne crains pas leur *descente* et nous nous défendrons jusqu'à la dernière goutte . . . de cire."

The French people have always displayed a remarkable talent for caricature : in the above case, nothing is forgotten ; although M. Hennequin, one of the counsel who took part in both cases, is called *henriquiniste* in order to carry out the caricaturist's idea, the allusion is patent. Meanwhile Mme. de Feuchères returned to Saint-Leu where her first care was to alter the wing of the *château* in which the tragedy had been enacted. A fire broke out soon afterwards and Sophie was accused of setting fire to her own property in order to destroy all traces of the crime which popular opinion declared had been committed.

Saint-Leu cannot have been a very cheerful abode, and we are not surprised to learn that Mme. de Feuchères spent more of her time in town than at her country seat. During the winter of 1831-32 Sophie paid a visit to London in company with her nephew, James Dawes ; the latter, on returning to France, was taken



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ill during the night at Calais and died very suddenly—so suddenly, in fact, that Mme. de Feuchères nearly found herself involved in another scandal. However there is no reason to suppose that she was in any way connected with his death, for the aunt and nephew—or mother and son, as some historians say—were apparently the best of friends. Indeed, had Mr. James Dawes turned traitor against his aunt, to whom he owed everything, he would have been guilty of most despicable behaviour.

The winter of 1831-32 saw the long-expected lawsuit : the princes de Rohan *v.* the duc d'Aumale and Mme. de Feuchères. The princes de Rohan based their action upon the plea that Mme. de Feuchères had exercised undue influence over their relative, the duc de Bourbon.

Nearly all the same witnesses, who had already appeared in the previous inquiry, were summoned to say all they knew concerning Sophie's influence over the duc de Bourbon.

In M. Hennequin's speech for the princes de Rohan before the *tribunal de première instance*, December 9th, 1831, he said :—

“Gentlemen, fate has ruled that the most illustrious family in France should pay for its immeasurable glory and renown by enduring immeasurable misfortunes. . . . The duc de Bour-

## M. Hennequin's Speech

bon did not drain the cup of suffering when he was wounded in his tenderest affections by the tragedy of Vincennes. No! he died; his last moments are shrouded in mystery, and most horrible suspicions hover round his tomb. . . . No one will now believe that the last of the Condés wished, by a suicidal act, to close the glorious annals of his house; therefore I think I am justified in saying that the most renowned name in history will emerge spotless from this abominable and hideous accusation. . . .

"Only those who are unfamiliar with the details of the duc de Bourbon's existence in our midst are ignorant of the storms which agitated the last few years of his life and which dated from the designs which certain persons had formed upon his fortune. We know that the idea of choosing the heir to his name and to his patrimony from among those members of his family whose opinions had been contrary to his throughout his life was very painful to him, that his indignation had been aroused by sundry other demands and that he had shown a far greater power of resistance than might have been expected from a man of his advanced years; we are also aware of the fact that he had lived in the most incomprehensible thralldom for a long time. We know that he was completely governed by a will stronger than his own, and that it was his sole desire, by sacrificing his own personal feelings and his real wishes, to purchase a little rest in his old age. We might look

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in vain, in what are termed, 'the last wishes of the duc de Bourbon,' for any trace of that liberty, that freedom, that independence of conduct which, according to Daguesseau, ought to be all apparent in such an important document as a last will and testament. Therefore the only question concerning certain well-known and notorious facts which remains to be resolved is : Whether the rights of his own kin are to be sacrificed because the fortunate legatees choose to keep silence ; and whether an illegal document, the fruit of long years of cruel and persistent bullying, is to be allowed to hold good ? The princes de Rohan do not think so ; having fulfilled the duties which they, as his relatives, are forced to discharge, they now intend to exercise their right to protest. . . .

"On his return to his native land in 1814, the duc de Bourbon showed himself to be still faithful to the noble principles which had hitherto governed his conduct. . . . He settled down in France where he divided his time between Chantilly, which he never left without regret ; Saint-Leu, which was to be so fatal to him ; and the Palais-Bourbon, which his father had built. Standing midway between the tomb of his father and that of his son, separated from his sister who, no less distinguished by her piety than by her illustrious birth, for long had devoted herself to a religious life and had retired with her companions to the old palais du Temple, the duc

## M. Hennequin's Speech

de Bourbon found himself by his isolation, by the need of affection with which his soul was filled, and by his great riches, exposed to all manner of schemes and plots to deprive him of his fortune. I must now speak to you of a woman who is fated to play a very important part in this painful lawsuit.

"Adorned, at least so they tell us, with all the charms which can captivate the heart of man and endowed, as her letters prove, with great intellectual powers, Madame la baronne de Feuchères, of English origin, lived under the Prince's protection in 1822, at which date I think it my duty to pause ; and as it is easy to foresee, from certain expressions contained in one of this lady's letters, that it has been proposed to hold her up to you as a model of disinterestedness, it is my duty to give you a short account of all the benefits which the Prince showered upon her.

"During the year 1825, Mme. de Feuchères received from the Prince one million francs, as is proved by an entry made by the Prince's secretary ; in 1829, the income drawn by her from the Prince's privy purse amounted to 120,000 francs. In 1824, Mme. la baronne de Feuchères made a journey to drink the waters of Aix-les-Bains, and her correspondence explains the all-powerful and fascinating spell which she exercised for so many years over the Prince and from which he, during the last few months of his life, tried in vain to free himself. This journey began at the end of July

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and continued until the end of September. On the occasion of this journey to drink the waters of Aix, Mme. de Feuchères went to Rome, visited Naples, Venice, in fact the whole of Italy, and this journey was made the occasion of a correspondence between this lady and the Prince which certain persons have tried to interpret to suit their own ends.

“ People may say that the Prince was sincerely attached to Mme. de Feuchères—we are quite ready to agree with our opponents upon that point : we will add that, had this will been the only reward for her affection, we should be able to understand the action of the counsel on the opposite side ; but it will be very easy for us to prove that this affection was not sufficient to warrant such a document and that operations of another nature alone caused the signing of the document of which we contest the lawfulness. . . .

“ Already in the year 1824, by a will signed previous to the journey to Aix-les-Bains, Mme. de Feuchères' future had been assured. By a will written with the testator's own hand, and placed in her keeping, she was to inherit Boissy and Saint-Leu, and the rents from those estates were surrendered to her. We find the following note made in the handwriting of the Prince's secretary :

“ ‘ Paid to Mme. de Feuchères, July 2nd, 1824, 5,000 francs for the first quarter of the rents of Saint-Leu.’

## M. Hennequin's Speech

"We shall see that this system of surrender was later applied to the rents of the forest of Enghien.

"Mme. de Feuchères' journeys to England were made the occasion of fresh tokens of the Prince's affection, numerous proofs of which may be produced here without, however, altering in any manner the point in question.

"Well aware of the duc de Bourbon's affection for her, Mme. de Feuchères wished to satisfy more than one ambition. She had no intention of contenting herself with the devise in her favour in the will of 1824 ; she hoped that the certitude of a *donation entre-vifs* would insure her from any trouble in the future concerning the will ; but above all, she wished to see the command of Louis XVIII, forbidding her to appear at court, revoked ; this desire was stimulated by her wounded pride and by one of the allies who had been attracted to her by her good fortune.

"The Prince wrote to the King on this subject ; but this revocation which was to constitute something more important than a mere act of tolerance, encountered numerous difficulties. Mme. de Feuchères needed the protection of some person no less powerful than enterprising.

"And this need laid the foundations of a deep conspiracy. Her own private share in the will might still be increased if an adoptive son could be found to act as the prince de Condé's residuary legatee. We can easily understand that a certain

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powerful and prolific family wished to see this post filled by one of its scions. But what difficulties had to be surmounted ! . . . Did not the Prince's entire political career place an insurmountable barrier against the accomplishment of such a project ?

" You will now understand why I lately reminded you of the Prince's glorious past and of the traditions of his family ; they constitute a remarkable contrast. . . .

" Already in 1822, the Prince had been persuaded, thanks to the respect for the laws of society and family affection (!) which he had always shown, to stand godfather to one of the sons of the duc d'Orléans. This was one victory, doubtless ; but at the time when these attacks first began, the prince was too young to show what manner of man he was likely to become in the future ; it was considered wiser to draw the duc de Bourbon's attention to the young prince de Nemours who seemed to possess, not only the exterior graces which belong to all the members of his family, but likewise a most amiable disposition and most generous feelings. What could be more ingenious than a newspaper article calling the duke's attention to this young prince and hinting to him what he was expected to do ; and thus, by a clever allusion to the fictions of the past, pave the way to future realities ? . . . "

M. Hennequin then gives a complete and skil-

## Important Correspondence

fully worded summary of the facts of the case ; this speech, which covers 179 closely printed pages, was published by Warée, of the Quai Voltaire, Paris, in 1832. We search in vain for the all-important correspondence which passed between the chief actors in this drama : the duc d'Orléans, the duc de Bourbon, Mme. de Feuchères, Marie-Amélie and Mademoiselle d'Orléans (Mme. Adélaïde) ; these letters, at that time, were carefully hidden away in the drawer of a cabinet in the palace of the Tuileries with this inscription written in Mme. Adélaïde's handwriting : *Correspondence concerning the duc de Bourbon and Mme. de Feuchères*. The century-old chestnut trees in the gardens of the Tuileries were to bud, burst into blossom and shed their golden burden of leaves many times before those letters were unearthed from their secret hiding-place. Once more and yet once again—how many more times in future ages ?—the old-world charm and peace of those leafy avenues were to be broken by angry cries, the roar of the encroaching waves from the neighbouring *faubourgs* ?

M. Hennequin ended his speech with the following words :

“ I desire to call your attention to one last fact. A prince has disappeared from among his officers



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and servitors ; a violent death has put an end to his days.

“ His wishes were known to all of us ; his life was not in danger ; his future was assured ; it was absolutely and physically impossible for him to kill himself ; certain proofs of the presence of murderers, all sorts of traces and indications show that it was a case of murder ; and yet the powerful house which has been called by the terms of the will to receive the victim’s inheritance, does not see that it is its duty to revenge his death ; it has been left to one of his own kin, disinherited by this will, to accept the mission of discovering the author of that great crime. Doubtless the tender years of the legatee, the fact that he is still a minor, exculpate him from all blame in this ignoble inaction and prevent us asking him to account for such inconsiderate conduct ; and yet we must confess that the fact that the testator is already completely forgotten throws a sinister and shameful shadow over the conduct of the residuary legatee’s family. . . .

“ The Paris court of justice, in declaring that it had not been proved that the Prince’s death was the result of a crime, has observed absolute silence on the important question : Were there any traces that a murder had been committed or any proofs of culpability ? The fact of ordering an inquiry to be made concerning the details which we have just furnished would by no means imply that we wished to dispute the verdict that

## An Eloquent Peroration

there was not sufficient cause to give rise to a prosecution. . . .

“What hinders us from seeking to discover the truth ? . . . It is true that certain illustrious names have been mentioned during this dispute in which civilization only seems to have bestowed all its benefits in order that the principle of man’s moral liberty may be proclaimed all the more loudly to the whole world. . . . I will not say that it will not be long before the King, as the father of a numerous family, consoles himself for the loss of his relative ; no such jests shall be heard from my lips ; nothing commonplace should be spoken during such important discussions ! the language uttered in our midst should be the language used in the law-courts of former times and which is still spoken in the English law-courts, and such will I use in your presence to-day. . . .

“Kings, magistrates, warriors, statesmen, orators, lawyers, we can only hope to triumph by accomplishing the general duties committed to the charge of every intelligent being and the special duties confided to the members of our church. . . .

“Kings, magistrates, men of all classes, what shall we leave behind us to remind the world in future ages that we have lived and died ? Nothing but the memory of the virtues which we once possessed ! . . . nothing but the memory of the duties which we once fulfilled ! ”

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During the lawsuit of December, 1831—January, 1832, the conduct of M. de Surval was made the subject of rather severe criticism. It was declared that he had been nominated to the elevated position which he had occupied during the duc de Bourbon's lifetime by Mme. de Feuchères. In order to disculpate himself, he wrote a letter to Maître Lavaux, Sophie's counsel, in which he declared that, had the duke consented to follow his advice and turned his tyrant out of the house, he would still be alive. Here is the letter in question :—

“ PALAIS-BOURBON, *December 29th*, 1831.

“ I have just read, *monsieur*, in the *Gazette des Tribunaux*, the speech uttered by you, during the sitting of December 23rd, in favour of Mme. de Feuchères in the lawsuit concerning the will of Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon.

“ It is a lawyer's first duty to try by every means in his power to clear his client from all unjust accusations ; such a task is eminently honourable. But when that lawyer gives vent to his animosity and hatred for a witness in the case, he deviates from the rôle of a self-respecting lawyer ; and I shall beg you to allow me, *monsieur*, to address the following remarks to you on that portion of your speech which directly concerns myself.

“ First of all, *monsieur*, I never abuse defenceless

## M. de Surval's Reply

persons. My placid disposition is familiar enough to everybody who knows me. I have never launched out into abuse of Mme. de Feuchères, as you say. When I gave evidence, I was careful to speak the truth concerning the facts with which I was familiar. If I had to do it again, I should say exactly the same things, because no personal consideration, no possible consequences of my evidence will ever make me tell an untruth. When I say that I felt profoundly indignant at Mme. de Feuchères' conduct towards Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon, when I say that I could furnish a hundred, nay, a thousand proofs of the fact that she tormented him during the last two years of his life, and that his existence, since he first made her acquaintance, was one long series of petty vexations and annoyances, I am telling the truth and nothing but the truth ; it has never been my habit to abuse people, as you are pleased to accuse me of doing. You then say that it was through Mme. de Feuchères' intervention that I entered the Prince's service. If such had been the case, I would not deny it. Was it not an open secret, in fact, that all the officers of the Prince's household were chosen by her ? The power, the terrible power—for it was indeed terrible, since the unhappy Prince trembled at the mere thought of resisting it—the power which she had obtained over him prevented him from doing the least thing without first obtaining her permission ; and if I deny the fact that I was engaged, but allow

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that I was *promoted* by her to the position which I lately occupied in the Prince's household, it is because I revere the truth and not because I attach any importance to the fact. . . . M. de Gatigny was at that time in a deplorable state of health ; in fact he seemed getting weaker and weaker. Finally the Prince, foreseeing that all would soon be over with his poor servitor, summoned me one morning to his presence and said : ' Gatigny's condition is worse than ever. I do not think he will last much longer. I must inform you that, if I have the misfortune to lose him, I shall choose you to take his place. Make your arrangements accordingly. But I must also warn you that this cannot come about unless you are on good terms with Mme. de Feuchères. I wish to enjoy peace at home ; I have had quite enough trouble and worry and I want to have no more.' (Alas ! the poor Prince did not know what was in store for him !) He added : ' So you must arrange matters with her. You have already fallen out once with her : try to make her forget it. See her and do your best to interest her in your case.' And this is exactly what I did ; although I am no courtier I, in my desire to please the Prince, approached Mme. de Feuchères to whom I wrote on March 25th, one month before the death of M. de Gatigny, begging her to remember me in case he should be obliged, on account of his incurable malady, to retire, for people at the palace said that he would have to do so. I am astonished that

## M. de Surval's Reply

Mme. de Feuchères has not thought fit to produce this letter in court. Far from denying the fact that I wrote it, I should be the first to reproduce it, if I did not fear to prolong this explanation which is already too long ; for I kept an exact copy which I now have before me. When M. de Gatigny died, I succeeded him. Everybody supposed, and Mme. de Feuchères herself believed, that she was the cause of my nomination ; this was true, in one sense ; for had she opposed it, as she had done on frequent occasions, I should not have been nominated ; that is very true, but it is none the less certain that she was moved to do so in consequence of the conversation which the Prince had had with me. My nomination, however, was a very politic act on Mme. de Feuchères' part. In giving her consent, she became somewhat reconciled with public opinion which had already accused her of wishing to expel all the old servitors of the house of Condé ; and she hoped that gratitude would oblige me to give in to her wishes on all occasions. . . . On the morrow, however, when I was thanking the Prince for the confidence with which he had treated me (for it was useless for Mme. de Feuchères to deny the fact, it was to him alone that I owed any gratitude, and it was he alone whom I swore to serve faithfully) ; on the morrow, I repeat, I could not refrain from repeating to the Prince a certain conversation which I had had with one of Mme. de Feuchères' nephews ; he

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only replied : ' We must take no notice ; we must take no notice and dissemble. The important matter is that you have been nominated ; the only thing you have to think about now is for us to get on well together.' He then gave me particular instructions concerning my behaviour towards her and hers. This is the story of how I came to enter the house of Condé by the intervention of Mme. de Feuchères ; this is the explanation of that fact ; so you can judge how much is true and how much is false of her assertions. . . .

" As to your little thrust at my self-love : why should you think it strange that M. Robin was commissioned to draw up the will instead of myself ? Besides, I must confess that, as long as I saw that the Prince was determined not to do what was asked of him, I never troubled my head much about wills, of which documents I and MM. de Lambot, Robin, etc., etc., drew up at least a dozen which the Prince always rejected one after the other and either hid away in his writing-desk or gave to me.

" However, *monsieur*, as concerns the rough draft of the will which M. Robin prepared and on which you say you have been *lucky* enough to discover these words written in the Prince's own handwriting : ' Such as my ancestors possessed, and as I myself possess it,' I undertake to prove that your assertion concerning this matter is false ; my memory tells me that you are mis-

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taken ; and I have just been to see the notary Robin who proved to me that the underlined words were in my own handwriting and had not been inserted without cause. My writing, which is almost illegible, is so different from that of the Prince which is so clear and neat that anyone who said that they were written by him would indeed be extremely foolish. So my evidence stands as it was, that : ' the Prince experienced great repugnance, immense repugnance, at the idea of the forest of Enghien, the property of his ancestors for so many years, passing into the hands of Mme. de Feuchères.' This he told me and repeated a hundred times. He could not understand her indiscreet insistence upon this matter and he would have preferred to have given her something of greater value, perhaps, than the forest of Enghien.

"Concerning the drafts of those wills which were pressed upon the attention of Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon, he never would consent to listen or to pay any attention to those which were presented to him without my knowledge ; he had warned me that certain persons had endeavoured on more than one occasion to persuade him to sign these documents ; he added that he would never do such a thing unless the document were presented to him by myself. Certainly nobody more than myself wished that Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon would make his will ; and if we believe the sinister saying that, ' men will do



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nothing in this world unless it be to their interest,' was it not to my interest, very much to my interest to wish that the will might be signed without more delay ? It is therefore proved that I desired it ; but although I wished to obtain this result, I did not wish to see the unhappy Prince tormented and worried as he had been of late ; he frequently complained to me that their importunity inflamed his blood ; that they prevented him sleeping ; that he could get no rest, and that they were shortening his life ; I did not wish to see them put the knife to his throat, as he himself expressed it in a graphic phrase so strangely misinterpreted by you. This, *monsieur*, I did not want to see ; and this is how he, by his own conduct, prevented me openly resisting Mme. de Feuchères' influence over him. I hoped that time and certain favourable circumstances would do wonders ; and I had reason to hope that he would at last consent to part from her ; had he shown a little more determination and thus aided me in my task, I should certainly have succeeded. I had, therefore, paid but little attention to the document in question when, reduced to beg for mercy and unable to obtain the breathing-time for which he had prayed so hard, and which even Monseigneur le duc d'Orléans had been moved to try and obtain for him, he said to me : ' Ah, well ! I must make the best of it and try to obtain peace, if I can, for the last few remaining years of my life.' I alone saw and know what he had to endure before he gave in to her

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wishes. . . . From that moment, seeing that he had resigned himself to his fate, I, too, was obliged to resign myself and to respect his grief. To this assertion I might add a hundred similar assertions of the same nature and thus prove what I have already said. Because my late answer to the question which was put to me by *M. le conseiller-rapporteur* was precise and simply-worded, you infer that I am inconsistent and that I alter my assertions to suit my audience. Because I did not dwell longer upon the evident violence with which the Prince was treated, because I touched as lightly as possible upon everything which concerned the will in any way, that is to say after the Prince had made up his mind to resign himself to his fate, you tax me with inconsistency. Was there any need, *monsieur*, to scrutinize my last assertions and to compare them with the evidence given by me on the occasion of the first inquiry ? Was there any need to add fresh details to those which I had already furnished and which, it seems to me, proved all I wanted to prove ? *M. le conseiller-rapporteur*, if we ask him to speak, will tell you that I frequently said to him : ' I will not dwell upon the numerous scenes which took place, nor upon the unhappy Prince's daily lamentations ; I should never get to the end of my story, and I could furnish volumes of evidence upon this subject.' That is why I repeat I gave evidence in the inquiry before the criminal court as to acts of violence and the discovery of the

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murder, and why I gave a short and simple account of the details concerning the signing of the will after the unhappy Prince had made up his mind to submit. The accusation of inconsistency which you make against me and which flows from your lips with such fluency, as the means of denying a witness who has been so imprudent in the eyes of your client as to be unable to lie before justice, is unfounded. You then produce, *monsieur*, a letter written by me to Mme. de Feuchères on the morning of August 20th, and in which I state that I had found the Prince unprepared to act and that I must have another interview with her, etc., etc. You speak of this letter as of another proof of my unfaithfulness to the Prince. Ah, *monsieur*, cannot you understand that I was acting on the Prince's instructions which obliged me to defer to Mme. de Feuchères' wishes and, at the same time, to be most discreet in my behaviour towards her? As you yourself say, *monsieur*, it was on leaving the Prince's study where I had just drawn up the letter to Monseigneur le duc d'Orléans, and where the Prince had begged me to repeat to Mme. de Feuchères, as coming from myself, that she would have infinite trouble to make him consent, and that I had better announce the news which she was about to learn concerning Monseigneur le duc d'Orléans' application in order to make it appear more natural—I repeat, it was at that very moment that I wrote the letter to

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Mme. de Feuchères of which you speak. What better proof can I give of what I have just said than the result of those actions ? In short, if I had acted at that time in the interests of Mme. de Feuchères rather than in those of the Prince, should I not have hastened to inform her of the contents of the letter which I had just written in the Prince's study and which had just been taken to Neuilly by the messenger Cressy ? Far from doing that, I let her learn of Monseigneur le duc d'Orléans' letter from his Royal Highness's own lips, for the latter, desirous of pleasing Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon, had hastened off to the Palais-Bourbon almost immediately after receiving the letter. As I have already said, *monsieur*, I much wished the Prince to make his will ; it was to my interest that he should do so ; could there be anything more disastrous, in fact, had I cause to fear anything more than the dispersion, the division of that huge fortune ? Yes, *monsieur*, I longed to see the house of Condé continued, it was to my interest that it should continue to exist, and the letter which I wrote to Mme. de Feuchères in the above-mentioned circumstances and from which you quote, expressed my feelings upon the subject. Yes, I had found the Prince *very unprepared* to sign the document which she wished to force him to sign and which I myself longed to see him sign of his own free will. Besides you will allow, *monsieur*, that it was my duty to obey the commands which I had received from the Prince

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by writing to Monseigneur le duc d'Orléans the letter which you know.

“ Concerning the behaviour which I was obliged to observe for such a long time towards Mme. de Feuchères, and especially on this particular occasion, I obeyed, I repeat, the dictates of the Prince to whom I had devoted my whole life ; but I was far from wishing to serve the ambition and greed of this woman who, I have said it once and I say it again, made his life a perfect torment to him. She herself suspected that the Prince and I had agreed to act together and she often displayed signs of anxiety. It was repeated to me one day, as a warning, that she had been heard to say : ‘ I am sure that Monseigneur is up to something with M. de Surval ; we must be on our guard.’ Mme. de Feuchères had guessed aright ; but we were as puppets in her hands ; she was far too clever for us and we should have got the worst of it sooner or later. The Prince’s partiality for her, the terrible power which she had obtained over him, the terror which she inspired in his breast, all those weapons which she knew how to use so skilfully were in her hands, and we all know that she made use of all of them in turn. And yet I left no stone unturned in my endeavours to free the unhappy Prince from the fatal yoke under which he groaned. Learn this fact as she learnt it, *monsieur*, and let it increase, if that be possible, her hatred for me. Shortly before the signing of the will, on one occasion

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when the Prince said to me : ' But she threatens to go off if I won't give my consent ! ' and I replied : ' Well, Monseigneur, let her go ! '—that very day I handed to the Prince a plan for the reorganization of his household, by which plan she and hers would have been turned out of doors. The Prince kept this plan (which I still have in my writing-table) for forty-eight hours, which proves that he was considering it. . . . He gave it back to me after having altered a name which did not meet with his approval, all of which proves that, had he only shown a little determination in the matter, our plan might have been executed during the absence with which he had been threatened ; but the unhappy Prince was so entangled that although he, in his daily conversations with me, in which conversations he displayed all his wit, tact, and judgment, was obliged to confess his weakness and its disastrous results, he was unable to free himself. So you see that the Prince was in the habit of sacrificing his peace of mind, his repose and something else which I dare not mention here (I say it to my deep sorrow) to puerile considerations. Not a day passed that he did not deplore his weakness and his inability to conquer it. *Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor* : these words by Horace, written in his own handwriting, which M. Borel de Bretizel, I and many other persons present during the taking of the inventory at Saint-Leu, found among his papers, are they not another

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proof? I regret, and I shall always bitterly regret, that the unhappy Prince did not have the strength of mind to consent to the ejection; I am convinced that, had it taken place, he would still be alive. Yes, *monsieur*, he would have escaped the horrible fate which was in store for him. . . .

"Such is the tribute which I desire to pay to the unfortunate Prince whose life I would gladly have prolonged at the sacrifice of my own. For the same reason, *monsieur*, I shall never cease to regret as long as I live that it was through me that the will was signed which now rejoices Mme. de Feuchères' heart, so convinced am I that it was, in some measure, the cause of the death of the unhappy Prince.

"I make this statement fearlessly, and I leave to future justice and to the elevated sentiments which Monseigneur le duc d'Aumale will surely possess when he is a little older, to appreciate my regrets concerning this matter.

"I conclude, *monsieur*, and I shall wait to say any more until I have heard your next speech. I shall reply with fresh proofs, should Mme. de Feuchères prompt you to make new and false accusations against my honour. I have plenty of matter on the subject in question, and I can furnish volumes of evidence. So I shall not try to elude the discussion, and I shall expect you to re-enter the lists and to try to show off at my expense.

"I remain, etc.,

"BARON A. DE SURVAL."

## M. Hennequin's Intentions

With such a powerful protector as Louis-Philippe and with the assistance of such an astute defender as Maître Lavaux, Mme. de Feuchères was bound to emerge triumphant from any number of lawsuits ; in choosing Maître Lavaux, she showed another proof of her extraordinary clear-sightedness.

In M. Hennequin's rejoinder of January 13th, 1832, published by Warée in the same year in a volume of 274 pages, he says :—

“Gentlemen, the private life of Mme. de Feuchères, the causes which led to the death of the duc de Bourbon, the question as to whom we are to accuse of having speculated upon political passions in this case, have all been mooted by my opponents during the inquiry ; if, in this discussion, certain sad truths have been revealed, let them thank themselves for the results for which they and they only are responsible.

“Yes, I intend to follow in their footsteps, and no obstacles shall stop me doing so. Magistrates, are you counting upon being disappointed ? Do you imagine that I shall conceal any facts which might be of service to Justice, or that I shall only reveal them when it is too late for them to be of any use ? No, that is not my idea of serving humanity. I have been appealed to ; I am going to reply ; my duty has been placed,



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so to speak, before my eyes. . . . I intend to devote myself entirely to fulfilling it.

"It cannot be denied that the morality of certain parties is at stake when such parties are accused of instigation, captation and violence. I have the right to explain what I mean concerning matters connected with Mme. la baronne de Feuchères ; so far I have only referred to her conduct as being known to *all the world*. I have explained the wonderful fascination which this lady exercised over the duc de Bourbon. . . .

"Hold ! cries the powerful voice to which we have all listened in religious silence and which won my admiration and made me forget for a moment the interests at stake. . . . Hold ! do not reveal facts which it is your duty to hide from the public ; do not commit the impious action condemned by the Holy Scriptures !

"I might consult certain reports, which she does not take the trouble to deny, concerning her private life. With the exception of anonymous libels which it is sometimes best to pass over in silence, no one ought to keep silence when they read such serious accusations as those contained in the *Appel à l'opinion* and *Les Mystères de Saint-Leu*. The courts of justice are open to all alike ; silence always means either ignorance or compliance ; it is foolish to show resentment when a year has elapsed since the cause ceased to exist, and such conduct meets with scant sympathy.

## Sophie's Origin

“ Mme. la baronne de Feuchères' counsel tells us that she comes of an honourable family ; he has probably excellent reasons for wishing to represent her in a favourable light. In my rejoinder I shall probably inform you to what profession her parents belonged and what their position was and especially the name of her family ; for I myself could make neither head nor tail of the information contained in the documents produced by my adversaries during the inquiry.

“ You have been informed that Sophie Dawes, an Englishwoman by birth, while still young, was remarked among her *numerous brothers and sisters* by the duc de Bourbon who was then an exile. As you were also informed, he was fascinated by her charms ; and I can easily understand that, when she consulted him in 1817 concerning a proposal of marriage which she had just received, he spoke to her of *her pretty face* and of *her mirror* ; but what I cannot understand is that people should take the trouble to make insinuations which anyone can easily see through, for everybody knows what was in the duke's will.

“ You are well aware, *Messieurs*, that it is the law in France that, when a Frenchman marries a foreigner abroad, he is obliged to publish his marriage banns at the *mairie* of the *arrondissement* in which he is living at that time. I have before me the marriage-banns of M. Adrien

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de Feuchères with Mme. Sophie *Clarck* (sic) widow of William *Dawes* living in Paris, rue Neuve des Capucines, no. 9, daughter of Richard *Clarck* (sic) and *Jeanne* (sic) Walker, his wife. These banns were published June 4th, 1818.

“ They started for London where the widow Dawes arrived first. The marriage was celebrated in that city August 6th, 1818, and the name *Clarck* (sic) does not figure on the marriage certificate signed at St. Martin’s-in-the-Fields. This name, which Mme. de Feuchères did not use in England, was resumed when she returned to France. . . . What was this marriage of which my opponent makes no mention? Since he tells us of the marriages which his client might have contracted, surely he could have told us something about the first marriage which, he says, really did take place ?

“ But now comes the most extraordinary part of the affair ! Sophie Dawes had a nephew and a niece living with her, James Dawes and Matilda Dawes ; no doubt you thought that they were her first husband’s nephew and niece ? Well, you are mistaken ; they were her own nephew and niece, as Matilda Dawes’ marriage certificate shows. In their written consent and in the aforesaid marriage certificate, the members of the Dawes family do not call themselves Dawes, but Daw *dit* Dawes.

“ And, strange to say, the mother of Mme. de Feuchères, who had been living in Paris for

## Her Married Life

some years, is not mentioned in her granddaughter's marriage settlement. . . .

"The young Dawes was not less well treated than his sister, Matilda, by his aunt de Feuchères. He was made a baron and he, in his turn, was presented by the duc de Bourbon first with the sum of 200,000 francs (£8000) and then with the domain of Flassans which happened to be one of the domains which had originally belonged to the de Rohans and which the house of Condé had received through marriage with members of the de Rohan family.

"You have been informed that Sophie's married life was very happy for many years, and yet deep sorrows of long standing are mentioned in a letter which I will now read :

(Here follows the first letter written by M. de Feuchères to the duc de Bourbon.)

"It is clear, from the contents of this letter, that the colonel de Feuchères still believed in his wife's innocence. . . .

"It was in 1824 that the public first heard of any trouble between the couple. And in fact M. de Feuchères knew all at that time. . . . It was from Mme. de Feuchères' own lips that her husband learnt these cruel revelations. . . . This explains her sudden retreat in 1824 ; and, although during this lawsuit our opponents have thought fit to misconstrue the meaning of M. de Feuchères' letters in order to suit their own ends, no one will, I am sure, doubt his word. And yet what do

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they propose to do ? They wish you to believe the erroneous reports by which M. de Feuchères and the world in general were deceived for so many years. So you see, Mme. de Feuchères finds herself accused of dishonourable conduct at the very feet of her judges ; we must seek in her own confession, in her confession of past days, certain proofs which will prevent any further misrepresentations.

“ Mme. de Feuchères accepted the inevitable ; she thought fit to beat a retreat from the Palais-Bourbon for a few days at least. Did she retire to a convent ? I know not. However, one thing is quite certain and that is, that she, on her return, accepted the two bequests : Saint-Leu and the domain of Boissy. . . .

“ The journey which Mme. de Feuchères made in Italy was the occasion of another painful incident.

“ M. le comte and Mme. la comtesse de Choulot accompanied her ; M. le marquis de La Carte acted as courier. Did not Mme. de Feuchères who, as a married woman travelling abroad unaccompanied by her husband, could not conceal her position, shelter herself under the protection of M. de Choulot ? We may be allowed to think so ; and thus the visits which the duc de Bourbon’s gentlemen received wherever they went are explained. . . .

“ As to the incident which, I regret to say, has been mentioned during these proceedings, I

## Letter from the Archbishop of Paris

shall explain it by reading the whole of the letter of which you have hitherto only heard a part. I will then explain why I am not permitted to say anything more on the subject. Here is the letter from the archbishop of Paris to the *président du tribunal*.

“ ‘ PARIS, *December 24th*, 1831.

“ ‘ *Monsieur le Président*, during the sitting yesterday a document was read containing certain allegations which it is my duty to refute. You will doubtless think that I am acting rightly in sending a copy of this communication to the lawyers as well as to the press.

“ ‘ Maître Lavaux, Mme. de Feuchères’ counsel in the lawsuit concerning the will of Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon, prince de Condé, quotes from a letter written by Mme. de Feuchères to Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon, a letter which, although it is of no use to her cause, has wounded the archbishop of Paris in his tenderest and most sacred feelings.

“ ‘ I think it due to my reputation and to my diocese to protect myself from the arrows which a stranger, for I can call her nothing else, has let fall from her pen to the shame of all decency and truth. But I will revert to the past, and thus the public will be able to distinguish reality from fiction.

“ ‘ I seldom saw Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon. Twice a year, on New Year’s Day and on the

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feast of Saint-Louis, I used to leave my visiting-card on the Prince. In March, 1824, Mme. Louise de Condé, the prince de Bourbon's sister, who was then prioress of the convent of the Temple, was dangerously ill ; I often went to see her ; she had requested me to come and speak to her ; I carried to her the last consolations and the last succour of our religion. I often met Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon at the Temple ; he paid frequent visits to his sister during her last moments. He was kind enough to thank me for what he was pleased to call my care. Mme. Louise de Condé died. I presided at her obsequies which took place in the convent.

“ ‘ About the same time the remains of the duc d'Enghien were removed to the chapel of the *château* of Vincennes. I also presided at this sad ceremony ; the members of the duc de Bourbon's household were present.

“ ‘ A few days later, Monseigneur le duc de Bourbon sent one of his aides-de-camp to my palace in order to invite me to dinner. Thinking that the Prince wished to do me this honour in order to make some little return for my services, I sent a verbal acceptance, not suspecting for a moment that there could be any other cause. It turned out that I was quite mistaken and that there was another reason.

“ ‘ Only a few hours after receiving and accepting this invitation, I heard for the first time of the domestic events which were disturbing the Prince's

## Letter from the Archbishop of Paris

home at that time and which did not concern me in any way (!). On making inquiries, fearing lest I should find myself in an awkward position, I learnt the facts concerning M. de Feuchères' sudden departure, the duc de Bourbon's estrangement from many of his friends and certain rumours which were circulated in the town and which did not reflect much honour upon Mme. de Feuchères' conduct. Without wishing to express any opinion upon the subject, I could easily see that the invitation which I had received was calculated to compromise my reputation ; that my presence at the Palais-Bourbon, besides being very repugnant to me, would cause a veritable scandal, the consequences of which would reflect upon my religion, the priesthood and my administration. On the one hand I was placed in an awkward position by the fact that I had received and accepted an invitation from a prince of the blood ; it would be difficult and very impolite, worse perhaps, to refuse it ; on the other hand I was assured that the invitation had only been sent in order to suit Mme. de Feuchères' ends ; it was said that she already boasted of the fact at the Palais-Bourbon and I was told that a conversation had been overheard which left no doubts as to the reason of this invitation and the effect which it was expected to produce.

“ “ After turning the matter well over in my mind, I thought that there was only one course left open for me to pursue and that was to request



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Louis XVIII to grant me an audience and to beg him to tell me what I ought to do on this occasion when it seemed as if I should be absolutely forced to be rude to a prince of the blood. The audience was granted. The King, in terms which I am at a loss to repeat, so flattering were they, confirmed me in my opinion that I had only been invited in order to suit Mme. de Feuchères' plans, and agreed with me that it would be unseemly for me to appear at the Palais-Bourbon. On returning to my palace, I immediately wrote off to the Prince, begged him to excuse me and expressed my regret at being unable to dine with him.

“ ‘Sixteen months passed without my even hearing Mme. de Feuchères' name mentioned. In the month of June, 1825, I paid a visit to Italy for reasons of health ; in July I returned to France *via* Florence where I arrived Sunday the 24th at ten o'clock in the morning. I put up at the Hôtel d'Angleterre where I engaged rooms on the second floor ; I was accompanied by one of my vicars, M. Borderies, now bishop of Versailles, and M. Desjardins, both of whom saw everything I did, heard all I said, and were almost completely in my confidence. I only spent twenty-four hours in Florence. Mme. de Choulot, *née* de Chabannes, one of the great-nieces of my venerable predecessor, the cardinal de Périgord, came alone to visit me in the presence of my travelling companions ; she had rooms on the first floor

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of the same hotel. Having asked after my health, she told me that she was travelling with the *dame de Feuchères* and, after stammering a few words in praise of that lady, she asked me to visit her and to receive her. I refused. I thought it best, however, to return Mme. de Choulot's visit ; so I and my vicars went down to her apartment where I found Mme. de Feuchères whom I there saw for the first time in my life and whom I have never seen again. That was my only visit. It is quite certain that I never presented her with a bouquet of flowers ; this story and many others of the same kind are pure inventions. After what had happened in Paris, who can think that I should do such a thing ? . . .

“ ‘ Justice and common sense will appreciate my letter ; as for myself, although I find myself obliged to contradict a slanderous report which, by dint of being repeated, has almost become official, I rejoice to think that it furnishes me an opportunity to forgive my enemies.

“ ‘ I remain your very humble and very obedient servitor,

“ ‘ ✕ HYACINTHE, archbishop of Paris.

“ Mme. de Feuchères returned to Paris after this little episode which seems to cause her counsel infinite satisfaction. It may be that Mme. de Feuchères' advice was sometimes useful, but was it so in the case of the following event ? It

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would seem as if her opposition to the sale of the Palais-Bourbon was only prompted by kindness of heart ; but we shall alter our opinion when we have heard what M. Alfred de Gatigny has to say on the matter. This gentleman, who has made it his duty to avenge in a public manner the memory of his father who was so unjustly calumniated, gives us the following invaluable information :—

“ ‘ The Prince, in 1825, wanted to give Mme. de Feuchères *one million francs* ; he was told that, in order to accomplish his new and costly transaction without shortening himself in any way, he had better sell the Palais-Bourbon ; this sale did not take place, however. The Prince had recourse to loans. This sum, which was first to be paid by my father direct to Mme. de Feuchères, was given by the Prince in several consecutive instalments ; and the Prince’s receipts and cheques for cash, which were found in my father’s cash-box when his papers were examined after his death, prove that the Prince gave her the sum of 134,603 francs, 35 centimes, for expenses incurred during the trip to Savoy, Italy, and England, and for the purchase of diamonds and pearls for the said lady. The Prince bought the usufruct of the domain of Ermenonville about this time ; the works at Chantilly were completed, and the different contractors’ bills, which amounted to a considerable sum, had still to be paid ; besides the Prince wished to

## The Sale of the Palais-Bourbon

unite to his beautiful estate at Chantilly several portions of the forest which still belonged to the State and which adjoined his property; many estates in the environs of Chantilly had been offered to him for sale; such were the reasons which caused my father to suggest that the Prince should part with a palace which was far too big for him, which needed large sums every year to keep in order, and which my father saw had become the abode of Mme. de Feuchères' numerous relations and protégés. But what powerful motive prompted Mme. de Feuchères, in 1825, to oppose the sale of the Palais-Bourbon? That motive was entirely a personal matter: it was proposed to sell the whole palace at that time and Mme. de Feuchères was particularly anxious to obtain possession of the pavilion called *les petits appartements* with the garden and the grounds which belonged at that time and still belong to the Palais-Bourbon. The Prince refused to grant her this favour and gave her, instead of *les petits appartements*, the magnificent suite of rooms which she now occupies, and which, even at the time of my father's death, cost nearly 300,000 francs to keep in repair, that is to say, the building itself, the decorations and the furniture, as is proved by a memorandum made in my father's own handwriting communicated by me to M. Antheaume de Surval.

“Two years later, in 1827, Mme. de Feuchères changed her mind as to the sale of the palace,

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which took place in the month of July without any opposition on her part. But on this occasion, the Prince only wished to sell a portion ; and that part of the building inhabited by Mme. de Feuchères and her relatives was not included in the sale ; besides which, her mind at that time was entirely occupied by the prospect of the marriage of one of her nieces ; in fact, one month after the sale, and during the absence of my father who was ill at Vichy, this same palace was the scene of the celebration of the marriage of M. le marquis de Chabannes with Mlle. Dawes, to whom her aunt, Mme. de Feuchères, had made the Prince give a dowry of *one million francs*. A vast and splendidly furnished suite had also been prepared for the bride by the Prince's orders ; but, on her husband refusing to reside there, the apartment was given soon after to her brother, M. James Dawes, upon whom the Prince had settled the sum of 200,000 francs and the barony of Flassans in Provence. . . .

“ I will now leave to others the task of furnishing further details and discussing intrigues. I will turn my attention to the immense misfortune, the causes of which, according to my opponent, are still problematical. . . .

“ It was doubtless not without experiencing bitter grief that the duc de Bourbon heard the first rumble of the storm which was to cause the overthrow of the throne. I should be guilty of a grievous error if I were to tell you that he beheld

## A Man of Action

this great catastrophe unmoved. What I do say is: that we must study the different phases of the Prince's mental suffering since the events of July until his death.

"The Prince, reaping the fruits of the good deeds sown in the past, had no cause to be nervous for his own personal safety. He was adored by all his neighbours, and he himself was exposed to no annoyance. . . .

"The Lieutenant-General of the kingdom had shown himself to be a man of action. Monseigneur le duc d'Orléans, accompanied by M. de Lafayette, went to the Hôtel de Ville; the national guard was formed; Charles X had set out on the road to exile, but he did not go alone: he was accompanied by his guard. Business had begun again and everyone had cause to think that Louis-Philippe was about to ascend the throne. One fact, which we must forbear from criticizing in a political light but which we cannot deny, was that the duc de Bourbon saw that this event was a necessity and that on it alone depended future peace and prosperity. 'He often spoke to me on the subject,' says M. de Lavillegontier, 'and he seemed to do so quite unreservedly and without any hesitation.' M. de Lavillegontier adds: 'The Prince even told me what line of conduct I ought to follow.' . . .

"And yet the duc de Bourbon was by no means happy; he could think of nothing but Charles X,

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the daughter of Louis XVI, and the family of the duc de Berri.

“ Lecomte, in whom Mme. de Feuchères placed every confidence, certifies that the Prince’s only anxiety was for the safety of Charles X. Well ! on August 15th or 16th, we received the news that Charles X had embarked ; on August 20th, queen Amélie paid the Prince a very gracious visit. M. de Lavillegontier, who was present during that visit, says that the Prince seemed easier than usual and that he was quite cheerful and contented. . . .

“ On August 26th the Prince, no doubt in consequence of the scene which he had had with the baroness, gave orders to Manoury to send a messenger to Chantilly in order to tell M. de Choulot to come at eight o’clock on the morrow instead of ten o’clock. The Prince intended to start early in the morning. . . . Alas ! he was mistaken as to his destination ! . . .

“ He went upstairs with M. de Lavillegontier, M. de Mollac, and M. and Mme. de Préjean ; he bade them good night in a very affectionate manner. Mme. de Préjean says : ‘ *He was as calm as usual.*’ . . . But we must now hear M. de Belzunce.

“ M. de Belzunce does not believe in the theory of a suicide, he believes that it was a case of murder.

“ ‘ By refusing to believe in the theory of a suicide,’ says he, ‘ I am obliged to allow that it looks very much as if some horrible plot had been

## The Duke's Last Moments

made to kill the duke ; as no contusions were noticed, a fact which I have already pointed out to you, he (the Prince) could not have perished in the place or in the position in which he was found.' . . .

"The *valet de chambre* asked him at what time he wished to be called. 'At eight o'clock,' replied the Prince with his usual calmness. . . .

"And now he is alone, the unfortunate old man ; although no human eye can see him, we can still imagine what he did during the last moments of his life. . . .

"The Prince wore two watches : a hunting-watch which he always wound up himself and a more ornamental watch which his valet attended to. After M. Bonnie's departure, the Prince blew out the two candles which had been lighted and then got quietly into bed. The candles only burned for half an hour, as Manoury found on the morning of the 27th. . . .

"We know that Lecomte knocked at the Prince's door at eight o'clock and that he received no answer to his knocking. M. Bonnie and Lecomte then went downstairs to the room of Mme. de Feuchères whose conduct from this moment we should do well to observe.

"The former prefect, M. Rouen-Desmallets, tells us that he frequently went to Saint-Leu, where the Prince often invited him to dine. On learning of his death, M. Rouen-Desmallets was no less surprised than grieved. He went



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to the *château*. Although unacquainted with the circumstances attending the Prince's decease, he could not believe that the Prince would have been able to hang himself in this position ; he told his wife and his children that, had he not satisfied himself that it was impossible to enter the Prince's bedroom otherwise than by the door which he himself opened and shut, he could not have believed in the theory of suicide, although he suspected nobody. He was confirmed in this opinion by the wonderfully tidy state of the Prince's bed ; the blanket was turned down very neatly, as his valet always did when he warmed the bed.

" Manoury says the bed looked more as if it had been smoothed than as if it had been re-made.

" It very seldom happens that when a man is about to commit suicide that he does not take the precaution to shelter from suspicion all those who live under the same roof as himself by leaving a letter of farewell. Why did he commit a deed which might have brought trouble upon some innocent creature ? Is not the crime of suicide bad enough without adding other crimes to it ? Do you not see that, the more people assert that the Prince was beloved by all his servitors, the more they prove that, had he intended to take his own life, he would have felt the need of leaving a letter saying : ' I have done away with myself ; let no one be worried

## The Helplessness of Royalty

about the matter. I did it myself.' But we find no traces of such a letter. . . .

"It is not my custom to mock at royalty ; I gladly give honour where honour is due ; and yet it is impossible for me not to remark that men of royal descent, by the mere fact of their being of royal birth and parentage, are helpless beings. Ordinary mortals are forced, by circumstances, to learn to help themselves ; but princes have to trust to others to help them through the ordinary events of daily life. That was why the flight to Varennes was such a failure ; the illustrious fugitives, who had been brought up under the shadow of a palace, neither knew how to prepare for the journey, nor how to bear the fatigues of such a journey, nor how to be prudent and avoid running into danger. We know how long time seemed to the royal Carmelite when a prisoner ; one princess alone occupied her mind and kept her fingers busy, and that princess was the daughter of Louis XVI ; and when she returned to the Tuileries, she did not forget to take the studious habits acquired in the Temple.

"Obry says : ' I was ill at the time. . . . I could neither see the Prince hanging to the window fastening, nor could I go and see him when he was lying dead on his bed. My fellow-comrades having described to me in what position the Prince had been found, I could not help exclaiming that it was *impossible* for the Prince to have made the knots tied in the two handkerchiefs.

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I swear that, during the month of September, 1829, while the Prince was out duck-shooting at Chantilly, Panier, who usually accompanied him, fell ill and told me to accompany his master to the village. I carried the Prince's gun. The Prince, not wishing to be seen, ordered me to pass quietly behind the *château* of Enghien and to meet him in the village. The rope of the ferry-boat having broken, I begged *Monseigneur* to make a knot ; he tried two or three times but failed each time ; and although I took the liberty to show him how to do it, he did not succeed, his knots always slipped. I was obliged to work the boat with a pole in order to ferry *Monseigneur* over to the other side. This incident proved to me that *Monseigneur* could not tie a knot.'

" The pamphlet : *l'Appel à l'opinion* has excited Mme. la baronne de Feuchères' ire. I can quite understand that fact ; but her anger goes no further. Although she is very indignant, she does not complain. Remember that when the *Appel* first appeared, it gave all sorts of terrible accounts of her morality and her antecedents ; and yet she took no notice : she was not brave enough to protest. And now she expects us to be moved by her anger. She imagines that her counsel's talent will carry all before it ; she does not reply herself ; she denies nothing. Fits of passion, occurring a year after the event which aroused that passion, met with no sympathy.

## Mme. de Feuchères' Denials

"But the most cruel, the saddest part in the whole affair, the fact which has made the deepest impression upon my mind is that the Prince begged his valet to sleep outside his door. See what the Prince thought of his position ! Certain persons have tried to insinuate that the Prince wished thereby to shield himself from the temptation to commit suicide—as if the servant sleeping outside his door would save him from himself !

"According to Mme. de Feuchères, the *abbé* Pélier confided to Dr. Fontaneilles that he was quite certain that the Prince had committed suicide, but that he dared not say so lest he should not be able to be present at his funeral.

"I must not omit another incident. The baron de Surval says : ' A few days after the Prince's death, when I was talking to Mme. de Feuchères, she said to me : " You noticed the mark of the knock which the Prince gave himself, did you not ? Well, I should not be at all surprised to hear that it was the result of an attempt to commit suicide by hitting himself very hard against something" . . . . '

"It is impossible to hear such assertions without experiencing the deepest indignation. Mme. de Feuchères adds :

" ' I deny, and I deny it again and again, that there was any scene between us ; I swear that we were always on the most cordial and most affectionate terms with one another. I never asked him to give me anything ; I was

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always most unselfish ; whatever he did for myself and for my family was done of his own free will.' . . .

" We look in vain for indications of any great friendship existing between the two Princes (the duc d'Orléans and the duc de Bourbon). When the duchesse de Bourbon died so suddenly in the church of Sainte-Geneviève in January, 1822, it was the duc d'Orléans who was first summoned to tend his aunt, and it was from him that the old Prince learnt of the loss of that Bathilde whom he had once loved so dearly, whom he married when he was scarcely fifteen years of age, and who had given him the duc d'Enghien. The duc de Bourbon's letter is written in a moment of the deepest grief :—

" ' *January 11th, 1822.*

" ' Ah ! Monsieur ! how sad is my heart, torn by the cruel misfortune which we are now forced to bear ! the mother of my unfortunate son has ceased to exist ! their souls are reunited in heaven. Alas ! that is the only consolation we can hope to find in such a cruel moment.

" ' If I had the strength, I would hasten to embrace you and mix my tears with yours. What a sad occasion, *Monsieur*, on which to reassure you of my affection for you !

" ' L. H. J. DE BOURBON.'

" The unhappy Prince cries : ' They are reunited in heaven ! ' And yet you wish us to

## M. Hennequin concludes

believe that, by committing a crime, he has deprived himself for ever of the happiness of being able to meet his dear ones once more ! . . . ”

In concluding his speech, M. Hennequin said :—

“ One would have thought that the youthful legatee, for the sake of his honour and for the love of justice, would have wished to inquire into the causes which led to him being appointed to that post. No, certain persons care nothing whether he inherits all these cruel memories or not ; and thus he finds himself assailed by most horrible doubts. As to Mme. la baronne de Feuchères, I can quite understand why she is so frightened : what has she not to fear from an inquiry which may perhaps reveal the existence of certain deeds of violence ? By this inquiry, which you are doing your very best to avoid, can we alone hope to clear up this mystery.

“ But what care we for contradictions and for obstacles ? The duc de Bourbon’s will can only be accounted for by the fact that it was extorted from him by violence, and this fact explains certain other deeds.

“ Magistrates ! you will doubtless know how to prove your independence ; if you do so, your conduct will win praises in the future. We must not bequeathe a legacy of mystery to posterity ; we must tell future generations that, through you, thanks to your efforts, truth was liberated from the party spirit which had endeavoured

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to hold her in bondage for so many years and that she triumphed, thanks to you and you alone ! ”

Notwithstanding the lessons taught by the past, there are still some persons credulous enough to think that they can resist royal influence and hope to emerge triumphant from the fray. The letter of the archbishop of Paris quoted by M. Hennequin is a marvel of diplomacy. “ The king can do no wrong ! ” is the *leit-motiv*, although the archbishop was well aware of the scandalous state of affairs at the Palais-Bourbon and of the duc de Bourbon’s cruel treatment of Mme. de Rully ; and yet he writes of domestic events *which did not concern him in any way !* He would have done far better had he followed the example of his brother in God, the cardinal de La Fare who, when bishop of Nancy, endeavoured from the pulpit to check Louis XVI on the downward path which began at Versailles the Magnificent and ended on a foggy morning in January, 1793, amid the execrations of the populace massed on the Place de la Révolution.

As might have been expected, the princes de Rohan lost their case.

We will now quote from M. Barbey-Boissier’s work upon the comtesse Agénor de Gasparin :—

## Justice Bought with Gold

"In February, 1833, a sinister episode threw new light upon the private life of the citizen king. 'Have you heard,' said Mme. Boissier, 'of the lawsuit which has been brought against Mme. de Feuchères who is accused of having strangled the prince de Condé during the Revolution of July? It is said that she will be acquitted to the intense indignation of the whole of Paris who believes that she is guilty. This woman is of English extraction; her maiden name was Dawes. . . . The duke left her fourteen million francs in his will. . . . Gold was scattered liberally throughout the legal proceedings; and so they managed to wash their dirty linen to the satisfaction of the judges who appeared in the case . . . .'

" 'They say that Mme. la baronne de Feuchères used to make her friends dance to the tune of Jack-ketch and they add that, whereas most people try to seize Fortune by the forelock, the baroness caught her by the throat.' . . ."

It was about this time that Sophie took a little niece, the daughter of her sister Charlotte who had married a retired officer in the French army, to live with her. This little girl, then about ten years of age, was named Sophie Tharon.<sup>1</sup>

The palmy days when Sophie was able to bask

<sup>1</sup> Some of Sophie's biographers give the name Tanceron, others Chaveron.



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in the royal smile were growing fewer and fewer. Alas ! the time came when Sophie was obliged to realize that her presence was no longer required at the court of Louis-Philippe and Marie-Amélie.

The d'Orléans, having obtained what they wanted, made haste to forget their guardian angel.

Her visits to the Tuileries became so productive of embarrassment to both parties that they finally ceased altogether.

Finding herself deserted by royalty, she retired into private life and occupied herself with making advances to the leaders of the opposition party ; but Sophie found few brave enough to accept her offers of pecuniary assistance.

She soon noticed that even her humblest friends were beginning to neglect her ; and yet it was said that she was very generous and a case is cited of a young English woman whom she rescued from an awkward and painful position, endowed and gave in marriage to an important personage. But such was the popular prejudice against her that she dared not sign her name in the marriage settlement of the young couple who owed their happiness to her bounties. As we have already stated, Sophie had never really liked the French. Notwithstanding the fact that she owned the magnificent *châteaux* and

## Sophie Returns to England

estates of Saint-Leu, Boissy, Enghien, Montmorency, Mortefontaine and Ecouen, together with the right to inhabit a pavilion in the Palais-Bourbon whenever she wished to do so, she gradually disposed of all her property in France. She then returned to her native land where she purchased the estate of Bure Homage near Christchurch in Hampshire, where she built a house and furnished it in the French style. She also afterwards took a house at 5 Hyde Park Square.

Sophie's mother accompanied her when she left France and then went to reside at Hammer-smith where she died soon after. Nothing is known of this woman's movements during her daughter's successful career as Queen of Chantilly, except that she became a Roman Catholic and resided for several months at the well-known English Carmelite Convent in Paris.

Sophie, too, had joined the Roman Catholic Church, but at what period of her career is uncertain—probably about the time the *abbé* Briant undertook to complete her education.

Sophie's health began to fail towards the end of 1839 ; having noticed symptoms of dropsy she moved up to her London house in the following spring in order to obtain the best medical advice for her complaint. Feeling that she had not

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long to live, Sophie sent for her solicitor and told him to prepare a will for her ; she died, however, in Great Cumberland Street, now called Great Cumberland Place, on December 15th, 1840, without signing it. Strange to say, she did not succumb to the effects of the malady for which she had been receiving treatment, but to an attack of angina : she, too, died from suffocation. Towards the end of her life she displayed remarkable piety ; and those who assisted at her last moments declared that she showed no signs of fear at the approach of death ; it is said that, standing at her bedside just before her death, Sir Astley Cooper<sup>1</sup> whispered to her nephew, Mr. Edward Dawes, " She dies game."

Two portraits were made of Mme. la baronne de Feuchères by the aristocratic portrait-painter, the baron Gérard, in 1829 and 1830 ; notwithstanding my inquiries in Paris and London, I have been unable to obtain an engraving of either portrait.

A search was made immediately after her death

<sup>1</sup> Sir Astley Paston Cooper, first baronet of Gadebridge, born August 22nd, 1768. The most eminent surgeon of his day, was created a baronet August 31st, 1821, with remainder, in default of male issue, to his nephew, Astley Paston. He married first Anne, daughter of T. Cocks, and, secondly, Catherine, daughter of J. Jones. Sir Astley died s.p. February 12th, 1841, and his nephew succeeded to the title.

## Sophie's Will

to ascertain whether she had not left a proper will: a French memorandum was discovered in which Sophie bequeathed 4000 francs (£160) to each nephew and niece, and all the residue to Sophie Thanaron to whom, she said, she "had acted as mother since her tenderest years." There was a codicil to the effect that she left the sum of 50,000 francs (£2000) to the duc de Bourbon's godson, Obry, because he alone, of all the duke's servitors, was the only honest witness who had given evidence in the celebrated lawsuit." She added: "Of all the sorrows which poisoned a certain period of my existence and which caused me the most acute suffering, this lawsuit made me realize how impossible it was for me to fulfil my duty as trustee, which duty the duc de Bourbon confided to my care. I very humbly beg Monseigneur le duc d'Aumale (if ever he remembers the zeal with which I promoted his interests with the duc de Bourbon) not to refuse to accomplish the last wishes of his benefactor and that at least the children of France may profit by the legacy of a generous French prince."

As we have already seen, this legacy was never executed. Sophie had taken the precaution to choose some very capable men of business as her executors; their names were MM. Ganneron,

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Odilon-Barrot and Lavaux. Her will, however, presented one very grave defect: it was not written entirely in her own handwriting.

Several persons, thinking themselves duped of their lawful inheritance, eagerly seized this opportunity to contest the will and brought actions against the executors. The hospitals of Paris, to which the baron de Feuchères, Sophie's erstwhile husband, had assigned his share in the fortune which had been earned in dishonour, claimed the whole inheritance on the plea that, as Sophie's mother had been described as a spinster on the register of the parish in which the *Montespan de Saint-Leu* was born, Sophie was of illegitimate birth.

A brother and a sister (the latter named Mary Ann Clark) who, for some reason best known to themselves, seem to have kept in the background during their lucky sister's lifetime, now came forward and declared that they, as next of kin, were entitled to claim her entire fortune.

Perhaps Sophie had foreseen what would happen after her death and that was why she chose three French lawyers as her niece's guardians and as her executors. These gentlemen swore that they would not allow their young ward to be cheated of the fortune which her aunt had evidently intended her to enjoy.

## Disposal of Her Estate

The end of the matter was that all the different claimants received something ; however our experience of such arrangements has taught us that this is a sure way to please nobody.

The brother and sister each received £70,000, the hospitals of Paris £13,000 and Sophie Thanaron all the rest—which rest was worth having.<sup>1</sup>

It is a remarkable fact that Sophie only lived a little more than ten years after the demise of the duc de Bourbon ; ten years is a short time in which to enjoy a fortune which has taken twenty years to acquire, twenty years of anxiety and ceaseless intrigues. For we must remember

<sup>1</sup> Daw, otherwise Dawes, and others against de Feuchères, but =in pain of Adrien Victor baron de Feuchères. Thrice called and not appearing. Letters of Administration were granted in February, 1843, to

James Daw, or Dawes, of St. Helen's, nr. Ryde, Isle of Wight.  
Gentleman !

Mary Anne Clark, of 5 Hyde Park Square, Middlesex. Widow.  
And Charlotte (or<sup>se</sup> Mary Charlotte) Thanaron (the wife of Jean Baptiste Justin Thanaron), of Mortefontaine in France, her natural and lawful brother and sister and only next of kin.  
She died without child or parent.

Sureties to the bond :

Henry Seymour Westmacote, of Gray's Inn. Gentleman.  
And

Thomas Moxen the younger, of 69 Old Broad Street,  
City of London. Stockbroker.

Amount of the estate under £140,000. (Personal only at this date.)

From extracts of documents at Somerset House, kindly supplied by L. Churton Collins, Esq.

## Sophie Dawes

that, although Sophie Dawes had been a very rich woman ever since the beginning of her reign as Queen of Chantilly, her lot was far from enviable. Was she not constantly in dread lest some younger and prettier woman should push her off the throne? Had not the rumour that he had made another will disinheriting her, caused her to suffer tortures of anxiety?

It had needed an extraordinary amount of will-power to conquer all obstacles, drive away all relatives and all persons likely to dispute her sway over the duc de Bourbon and keep what she had won at the cost of infinite trouble to herself—and others.

But we must remember that Sophie's will was proof against everything. She had determined to educate herself if she ever got the chance to raise herself from the low society into which her one and only excursion into the *pays du tendre* had plunged her—and at the end of three years she was as well educated as many a lady born who has had all the advantages which money can offer. She had determined to find a husband when, her education having been completed, she considered herself fit to appear at court—and a husband was found in the person of the young Adrien Victor de Feuchères, who was blind enough to please even Sophie Dawes,

## An Uncommon Fate

but who was not dishonourable enough to continue to play the game when once the scales had fallen from his eyes. She had made up her mind to get readmitted to court—and, after much resistance on the part of Charles X and the duchesse d'Angoulême, she *was* admitted with many another *canaille*. She had sworn to die a rich woman—and she did so.

To be born in a fisherman's hut, brought up in a workhouse, live in a palace and die in the odour of sanctity is indeed an uncommon fate.

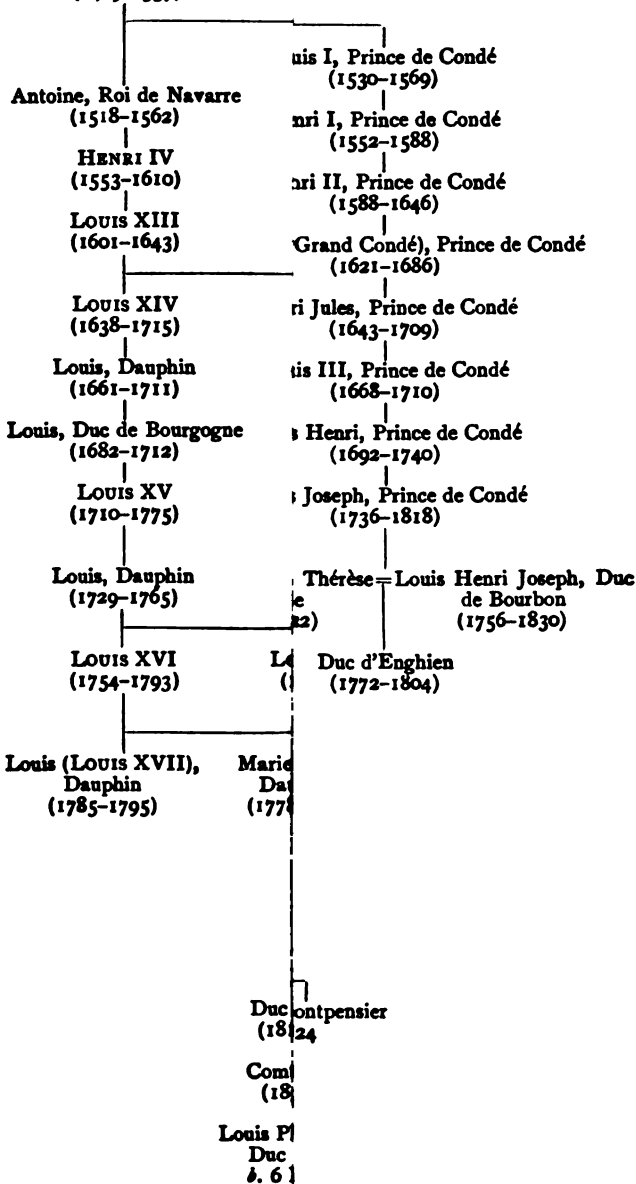
But Sophie's will was proof against everything, everything except Nemesis which came in the shape of *death by suffocation* to take her away before she had had time to enjoy the Condé millions.





# GENEALOGY OF CONDÉ

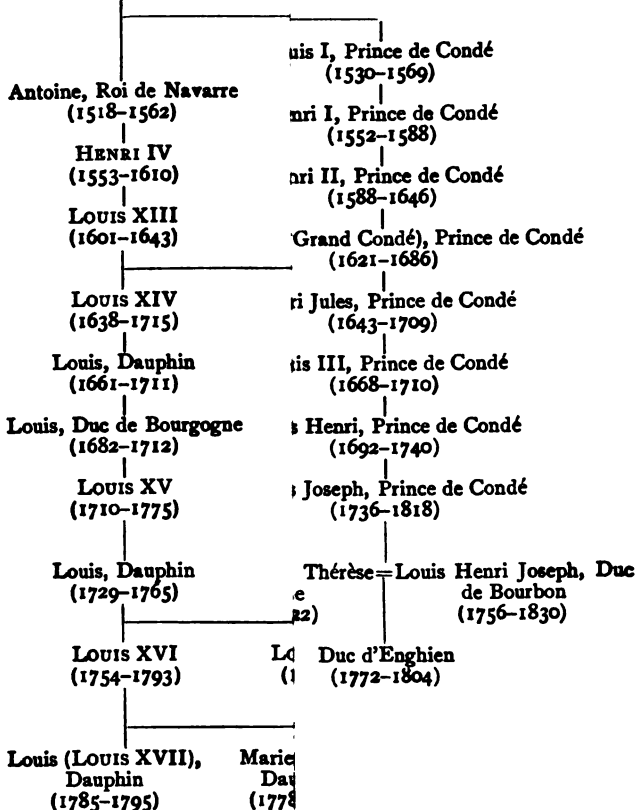
Charles, Duc de Vendôme  
(1489-1537)





# GENEALOGY OF CONDÉ

**Charles, Duc de Vendôme**  
(1489-1537)



**Duc d'Angoulême**  
(1812-1844)

**Comte de Paris**  
(1819-1891)

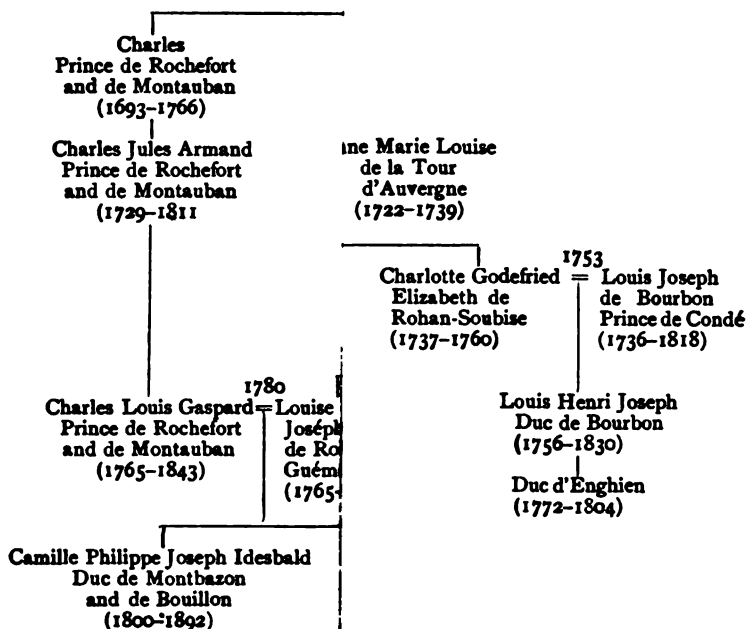
**Louis Philippe, Duc d'Angoulême**  
(1814-1846)



# GENN-CONDE

ROHAN-ROCHEFORT & MONTAUBAN

BOURBON-CONDÉ





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